

# Leading and Supportive LOVE

*The Truth About Dominant  
and Submissive Relationships*

**Chris M. Lyon**

**Leading and Supportive Love**  
**The Truth about Dominant and**  
**Submissive Relationships**

**Chris M. Lyon, CC, BCH**

Copyright 2012 by Chris M. Lyon Kindle Edition ISBN:  
9781301113385

License Notes All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the author, except in the case of a reviewer, who may quote brief passages embodied in critical articles or in a review.

Trademarked names may appear throughout this book. Rather than use a trademark symbol with every occurrence of a trademarked name, names are used in an editorial fashion, with no intention of infringement of the respective owner's trademark.

"I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me."

*-The most common regret of the dying, according to nurse Bronnie Ware, who worked for years in palliative care.*

"The best thing in life is to love and be loved"

*-Said by many, perhaps*

## **Author's Note and Dedication**

This book is an introduction and overview for the Dominant and Submissive Relationship Model, or what some may better relate to as "Leading and Supportive" Relationships. If you are a partner who fits best in this type of relationship, or if you care about someone who is, this is written for you.

Because of my background and the research I've done, people often have asked or even insisted that I write about this relationship dynamic, so much so that I began to feel a calling. These types of partners feel this information helps them explain more about who they are to those who may not understand. They are relieved to have something tangible that makes sense so they can communicate about it with those who are important to them. They say this helps with acceptance. Most importantly, they tell me it brings understanding for themselves and their loved ones.

Everyone is unique so please use this as a guideline and take whatever part(s.) are helpful to you.

I encourage you to be who you are meant to be; it's empowering to be true to your own character and nature. At times, it is more work than you wanted to do and more discomfort than you planned to bear. Ultimately, the rewards outweigh the hesitations and avoidance, and it's a magnificent victory to be enjoyed. In this direction, you'll have a better chance to find and maintain the love in your life that you are meant to have.

To ensure confidentiality and protect privacy, the names of individuals and details of client case illustrations and other examples have been changed.

# **Table of Contents**

[Author's Note and Dedication](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What is this?](#)

[So How Do You Know About This?](#)

[This Is Really Offensive, Isn't This Unhealthy?](#)

[How: The Control Shift](#)

[Rewards and an Amazing Voyage](#)

[Equals?](#)

[Who really has Control?](#)

[How Common is This and Does it Last?](#)

[The Profiles](#)

[The Supportive Partner Profile \(S-type\).](#)

[The Leading Partner Profile \(L-type\).](#)

[Surprises](#)

[Both or Either](#)

[How to Tell Which "Type" Someone Is](#)

[Let's Talk About Sex](#)

[The Biggest Problem for L/S Relationships](#)

[It May Not Be What You Think!](#)

[The S-type Partner and Their Loved Ones](#)

[L/S and Relating to Others](#)

[Calling Professional L/S Matchmakers](#)

[Abuse](#)

[Mental Health Professionals and L/S](#)

[What They Each Need in a Partner](#)

[The 2nd Biggest Problem](#)

[When You Know It's All Wrong](#)

[Avoid Creating an Ideal - Be an Observer](#)

[Potential Issues L/S Relationships May Face](#)

[Transference and Projection](#)

[L-type Vulnerability](#)

[S-type Needing Care; Being Priority](#)

[Stress and Alienation of the L-type](#)

[L-type Trust Issues; S-type Toggling](#)  
[Optimize Your L/S Relationship and be Preventative](#)  
[Communication Prevents a Ship from Sinking](#)  
[They Can't Read Your Mind – So Tell Them!](#)  
[Negotiate Negotiate Negotiate](#)  
[Secret Weapon: Mutual Understanding](#)  
[Empathy: Get It and Work Towards Mastery](#)  
[How to Love Each Other](#)  
[In Service](#)  
[Support Network](#)  
[Consequences and Rewards](#)  
[Other Aspects to L/S](#)  
[More Research Insights and Survey Results](#)  
[Final Thoughts for S-types](#)  
[Final Thoughts for L-types](#)  
[For L/S People Who Are "Sensitives"](#)  
[Appreciation](#)  
[About the Author](#)  
[L/S Resource List](#)  
[Notes](#)

# Introduction

As a young child, I'm at a family holiday gathering on a sunny southern California day in the late 1970s; in a house full of family, homemade food and gifts. I observe the usual scene of most of the women taking care of all of their children and seeing to it that they behave, eat, go to the bathroom, and play nice.

One of them also serves her husband food and waits on him patiently and thoughtfully. After the large meal, her husband sits back, relaxing into contented snores. Meanwhile, his wife tends to the children, and helps with cleanup from the meal. When he wakes up, she greets her husband cheerfully and helps load up the car before they say their goodbyes and leave.

That day, I don't remember this man saying more than a few sentences, and all of them were short requests/commands or grunts, either to his wife or his kids. I guess he was kind of scary to me at the time.

I soon came to resent this type of treatment as unfair and imagine that wives like this must be sad and abused, maybe even trapped in an unhappy life.

Decades later, as an adult spending face time with this couple, I realize how this man is humorous and sensitive, how much he adores and loves his children. I understand more about the care he has provided at all costs for their family to be happy and secure. He has consistently worked hard and carried great stress to gladly provide his family the quality of life and opportunities that he himself may never have had.

On the occasions I observed as a youth, this man (and others like him) had actually spent his day off visiting his wife's family and was very patient and polite about it. He



may not have completely felt like he fit in and may not have known what to say to the other ultra-energized, running, chattering children that he only saw once or twice a year. He was on a holiday break and just needed to sit back and breathe for a while.

He does his job. His wife was doing hers, as at the time, traditionally she did not work outside of the home. He and his wife lived by traditional roles and she seemed happy with it.

I found out later that some spouses were happy with their roles, others weren't. Other couples presented that the man was in charge, even though to me, the woman was really the head of the household.

Over time, things changed. Societal traditions morphed and shifted into varied relationship standards, as statistics showed a rise of both partners working for a living. The "balance of power" it seemed became more openly determined by each individual couple.

Still, I saw these scenes of couples in clearly hierarchal relationships played out. The gender varied in either "role," but most interesting was that both partners seemed to be happy and content with this arrangement.

## What is this?

Do you know anyone who seems to get "controlled" or "bossed around" in a relationship that they seem happy and content with? Do you notice that your friend or loved one seems to make decisions for their partner more than others normally would?

This is more common than you may think. This every day, long-term, intimate love relationship is one with an absolute established hierarchy, referred to as a "**Dominant and Submissive Relationship.**"

"**Dominant**" or "**submissive**" partners choose this for themselves *by predilection*, by preference and tendency – instead of due to tradition. This has become highly controversial to some and a "coming home" to others. Some think it's unfair, domineering, and unhealthy.

Others see it as a wonderful relationship of loving confluence between two people who are naturally attracted to this dynamic.

Either way, this relationship model can't be contrived; it's not one that is "expected" according to tradition, and it only fits and successfully works with two specific types: a dominant partner and a submissive partner.

There are many healthy kinds of relationships that work for many different people. This book is not taking a judgmental stance on which is "better" or "worse."

I am simply introducing and providing helpful information to promote understanding about this one type of relationship that works very well for some people. This information is presented with respect to other types of lifestyles and belief systems.

However, this book is not about specific communities, lifestyles, sexual, or religious beliefs and traditions. There

are plenty of excellent books to reference about those subjects.

A healthy relationship of this particular type can be extremely loving and successful. Power struggles that are so common in other relationship types are generally not an issue. An environment is created that supports partners being who they really are as well as valued and appreciated for their type.

This is a daily, committed, long-term, romantic/intimate partnership, comprised of a naturally dominant partner and a naturally submissive partner. This is not gender-specific; either type can be either gender.

Whether spoken or un-spoken, the couple has organically preferred and chosen to have a leader amongst the two of them. (A related dynamic can be a pair of business partners, or a group or team that requires a leader to optimize chances of reaching goals.)

Some people are inherently wired to be drawn to this kind of relationship and are naturally attracted to either a "dominant" or "submissive" type of partner. Specifically, *they are by nature, at their core, the dominant partner or the submissive partner in the relationship.* To them, any other type of relationship with a partner can feel uncomfortable, imbalanced and unnatural. So if this dynamic doesn't naturally appeal to you, I don't suggest you try it.

It's a law of nature for socialized animals and humans to have hierarchical relationships, whether at various levels or in various ways. There are those who answer that call in a more literal, thorough way. The couple has a "pack leader," or a dominant leader; and a submissive member. Through history to modern day, both roles have been held by both men and/or women.

The Dominant and Submissive Relationship is an ancient and contemporary harmonious dance that has been viewed as mysterious, magnetic, powerful and controversial in modern day society.

Imagine that in regard to mate/partner/spouse dynamics by inherent predilection, we have the word "dominant" at one end of a wide spectrum and the word "submissive" at the other end. In between those two end points are countless variations.

For example: some people take turns with family responsibilities, are more free-form with decisions for the couple, or family or have chosen or preferred areas that they are "in charge" of or "defer to" their partner for. Some people are more dominant or submissive in different areas or at different times in the relationship. Interestingly, many of these are considered egalitarian relationships yet are somewhat hierarchical in some areas.

The individuals attracted to the Dominant and Submissive Relationship are either at one end of this spectrum or at the end of the other, based on their nature and inherent preferences. This is not a feature of themselves that they changed or adjusted to, this wasn't decided due to religious or social beliefs or ideals.

Oh, and yes, this is a relationship where both partners are equals. I'll have more on that later.

Think about it, chances are you are probably either resonating with this subject personally or you are starting to think of someone in your family or circle of familiarity who seems like they would fit this relationship model.

Understanding this can help those people learn more about their friends and family members who are truly these partner types.

Hopefully this will help those of you who relate feel validated and clarity with this information. Perhaps you can benefit from some of the insight and examples shared here. After all, this book is about you.

## **"So How Do You Know About This?"**

I found that writing about something that can be so misunderstood and so natural, so controversial yet so normal has been a truly paradoxical experience. Here is how I have learned about this enigmatic and surprisingly common relationship so far:

**Personal and Professional Experience:** I've always been able to sense these types of relationships and found them fascinating, whether it seemed disturbing or comforting. Then: surprise - I found that in my relationships, I was at home at one end of the spectrum and attracted partners who were at the other end, and it was as natural as breathing. All of the long-term relationships I have been in are of this model. I live the experience thoroughly. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to talk to many people who identify as either partner type and to learn from them.

Over the past 10 years, I've successfully worked with many singles and couples who fit with this relationship model. Some were new at relationships; some have been together for over 60 years. Some are high profile couples; others are low-key couples living off of the grid. Some are religious, some lead alternative lifestyles. They are blue and white collar.

**Study and Research:** Dominant and Submissive Relationships have been of great interest to me, so I have spent nearly a quarter of century learning about the subject. I have read as much informative material as I could find about Dominant and Submissive Relationships, most of which is offered in relation to religion and alternative lifestyles. I have reviewed tens of thousands of online discussion groups, message boards and mailing lists since 1990.

**The Survey:** I recently conducted a non-scientific survey with 37 questions that showed general patterns from the trends and insights from dominant and submissive partner types. 335 respondents volunteered and took the survey. They were adults of mixed gender, of most age ranges, from 14 countries, with the large part residing in the U.S.

The survey was opinion-based research on attitudes and behaviors of those who consider themselves either a dominant or submissive partner. Question types used were open-ended, closed-ended, discrete and rating scale. The data was cross tabulated according to both types of partners.

**Interviews:** I interviewed dozens of people who are experienced or knowledgeable about Dominant and Submissive Relationships. This included a number of mental health professionals from all over the world.

Thank you to everyone who participated! Now you can be heard.

## "This Is Really Offensive, Isn't This Unhealthy?"

Some people still have the impression that if one partner is dominant and the other partner is submissive in a relationship that it's unhealthy or pathological. This is a fallacy. *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition*, known as *DSM IV*, is used by clinicians and psychiatrists to diagnose psychiatric illnesses. The *DSM IV* does not include dominant or submissive partner or personality types in its documentation.

There are many mental health professionals who recognize this dynamic as healthy and successful. Every single professional who I spoke with for input on this subject has validated that this type of relationship can be a healthy, viable relationship model.

There are so many general misconceptions about each partner type. Such as: The submissive partner is weaker and can't think for themselves. The dominant partner is domineering, selfishly manipulative and sets out to alienate their partner from loved ones and friends. Those are among the most common fallacies of this type of relationship that is understood best by the two types who participate in it.

I found that some people are very comfortable with the terms "**dominant**" and "**submissive**" as far as their role as a partner. To them, these words hold their own power and meaning and do not have negative meanings for them.

However, there are plenty of others who hesitate to see those terms as a good thing, since the mere definitions of them can be negative and completely inappropriate in relation to a healthy, loving partnership.

That's understandable. Please be clear that this is about awareness and understanding of "**dominant**" and "**submissive**" relationships. However, despite those being the primary terms used in these types of relationships, it's



clear that both of these words have negative connotations by mainstream standards, and quite frankly, they are technically misnomers.

So, for optimum comfort, understanding and acceptance of this subject, herein I've decided to use the most popular (and congruent) terms that the majority of our survey respondents chose: "**Leading**" and "**Supportive**."

I assure you that this does not mean that the "**Leading**" partner never supports and it's not that the "**Supportive**" partner never takes the lead of any element of the relationship. These terms are the descriptive verbiage of the overall theme and arrangement that is most consistent in the relationship.

So for this format, "**Leading and Supportive**" partners they will be. For simplicity, I'll use **L-type** and **S-type**. Further, these relationships will be described as "**Leading and Supportive Relationships**" or "**L/S**." They will be used as capitalized titles for clarity. If you are more comfortable with "**dominant**" and "**submissive**" terms, either set of terms works. Feel free to substitute those terms in your mind as you read, you are in good company.

So On We Go...

Feedback received about the Leading/Supportive Relationship model has proven that people strongly identify with these partner-definitions and are encouraged to be identifying with others.

I will be showing you real-life examples and case studies. Numerous therapists who have experience with this relationship model will check in and tell you what they really think about it.

I will examine profiles of each type of partner that show unexpected and surprising truths and share some eye-

opening statistics in reference to this "other" type of relationship.

We'll also examine problem areas and how these types of partners can overcome issues and have the most successful, loving bond possible. There will be surprises along the way and lots of a-ha moments for you L/S-types.

## **How: The Control Shift**

Both partners have their own choice and their own power in regards to the Leading and Supportive Relationship.

Through the natural progression of a new L/S relationship, the partners agree (often informally and in unspoken ways, but it could also be directly and definitively.) that they are in service to one another. They agree to a "Control Shift" in order to create the kind of relationship they are most naturally attracted to; so they can thrive in a healthy L/S relationship. (This is very different than people allowing a Control Shift due to perceived social obligation or other personal beliefs.)

This control shift happens when the S-type partner shifts some of their personal control to their L-type partner, and the L-type partner uses it to assume most of the authority for the couple and/or family. That creates a united dynamic that remains throughout the relationship. Their responsibilities are understood by both partners, and their cohesiveness helps keep their joint purpose as a couple or family reinforced and intact. This relationship has its special brand of harmony and productivity.

Of course non-L/S relationships also have agreements of the responsibilities between partners in various areas of their lives. Perhaps a partner takes over the extra-curricular choices for their children. A husband or wife may decide on the landscaping details for the home. They may agree that one partner makes the financial decisions for the family.

With an L/S relationship, the sharing of responsibilities, after usually being discussed by both partners, is determined by the L-type partner. The Control Shift (preferred and desired by both partners.) is more pervasive and generalized throughout the relationship.

## Rewards and an Amazing Voyage

Have you ever been in a relationship where there are difficulties deciding certain tasks or duties? Has it ever been a standoff about who will plan trips, fix the computer, clean the pool, or who will choose where to go for the next night out? How about struggling over who does what for the kids, bills, extended family, household, shopping, etc.? Have you wanted your partner to take better care of their health or save more money, but it remained a point of contention?

These things are not typical issues in Leading and Supportive Relationships. I discussed one advantage of L/S relationships being that each partner knows their responsibilities, which are in the areas of their strengths and abilities. Risk or frequency of occurrence for power struggles against each other is greatly minimized – in short: Less power struggle!

It seems that healthy Leading and Supportive Relationships may often have an organic built-in "Relationship Integrity." This may include: ethics, patterns, purpose, and methods of operation that are agreed on and adhered to by both partners.

Another touchstone is that this is a very service-oriented relationship. Not to say that other relationships are not. In a healthy L/S relationship, both partners are clear (whether spoken or unspoken) that they are in service to each other – *each especially in the ways that are their greatest strengths.*

For example, some would think that the Control Shift means that the S-type partner "loses" themselves in the relationship. In fact the opposite is true. What often happens when the S-type partner has an interest or a goal that they bring up to their partner, the L-type listens carefully and gathers information so they can help and support the S-type

with the situation. Then the L-type becomes quite the encouraging cheerleader for their partner.

There are many ways that L/S partners are in service to each other, in ways that really fit who they are and what they have to give. I'll expand on that later.

Have you ever wished that you could be openly affectionate with a partner and communicative about any issue, including intimacy? Maybe you had certain intimate or romantic inclinations that you wanted to share with someone? Did you have a vision of a great relationship and it just didn't happen with the people you were with over the years? Perhaps you didn't find it for so long and just settled for not being able to share love the way you really wanted to?

Being able to love in the ways that you desire to and are driven to love is an important concept for any type of loving, well-functioning relationship.

Some people find a customized fit for themselves in an L/S relationship, because of the type of partner they are. If one person needs to give love in certain ways, specifically as either an S-type or L-type partner, they need someone who is able and willing to receive that love in those ways.

Leading and Supportive partners who understand their type of relationship can recognize each other with a clearer understanding of themselves and each other.

People who are familiar with L/S relationships talk about it as a loving, powerful relationship that can have quite the balance between the two opposite dynamics.

Richard Levine, M.A., M.F.T., who practices psychotherapy in California, likens this type of relationship to "a dance, a tango...as the music of life swirls around them, one initiates movement while the other feels the movement and flawlessly follows. They don't compete, they cooperate.

They each recognize that the strength of one is in the ability to follow while the strength of the other is in the ability to lead. They experience the reciprocal forces of power and surrender allowing them to deeply value and appreciate one another. This can create a mutual respect and devotion."

A healthy Leading and Supportive Relationship is not about roles partners have, but rather the two types of partners who form a relationship that greatly serves both people: a true partnership.

At the very least, there is quite an extraordinary compatibility and mutual understanding. Again, destructive power struggles are generally not as much of an issue as with non-L/S relationships.

***L/S relationships can be an ideal environment for people to be loved and accepted for who they truly are.*** Compared to non-L/S relationships, L/S couples can be free of routine power struggles, as both partners are clear on and accepting of their part and duties in the relationship, the home and the family. Overlapping of duties is not a problem as it is usually short-term or due to necessity (e.g. illness of a partner, business travel, or family emergencies).

The partners are both dedicated in service to each other and both of them are very clear about it. There is immense appreciation because one could not be who they truly are in the relationship without the service of the other.

This helps promote security for both partners; establishing a stable, loving environment with low risk of conflict or misunderstanding. Healthy L/S is an example of compatibility at its finest while leaving plenty of room, time and energy for appreciation, closeness, and love. This is a very close and bonded relationship. Each person is appreciated for being the compatible fit for the other.

Consider a nautical analogy for a Leading and Supportive Relationship. We have a two-person sailing crew; the

Captain and First Mate. The Captain makes the decisions, determines the direction, studies the weather, decides when to go on the trip, maintains logging and communicates to the First Mate. The First Mate follows directions; is careful to follow the plan correctly, helps with maintenance and operations, reports to the Captain if they see any problems, maintains logging to ensure communication is consistent, provides relief and helps with cleaning and food preparation. When both partners assume their duties, it results in a seamless operation and smooth sailing.

When the wind shifts, it could affect the craft so the Captain may decide to change course. When steering a different course, the Captain calls "ready about" and the First Mate responds with "ready" before sails are moved from one side to another. Without this communication, one of the crew could lose their footing and be injured if the boom moves across the boat suddenly. Working together when an upcoming drawbridge is rising is also important to avoid damage of the boat's sails. Through their course, they work together without confusion or conflict. Each functions within their own capacity and together, they enjoy an amazing voyage.

## **Equals?**

"I Want to Have a Relationship With Both Partners Being Equal."

The following is a nod to theorists but before your eyes glaze over, you might re-think your concept of relationships after reading this section.

Do you think you have an egalitarian relationship with your partner? Dr. Marion J. Levy Jr., an American Sociologist and a Harvard-educated professor at Princeton University, is known for his work in modern Theoretical Anthropology and Structural Functionalism. He asserted that "nearly all social relationships have been, are and will be predominantly hierarchical. Hierarchical relationships are basic to human beings; nonhierarchical ones are specialized, if they exist at all."

He offered that the one type of relationship that is "generally institutionalized as predominantly egalitarian" is friendship; the concept that "all the parties to the relationship have identical rights and obligations."

However, he explained that "any given relationship initially institutionalized as predominantly nonhierarchical or egalitarian that persists long is increasingly likely to become hierarchical in actuality, if it has not been so from the very beginning...most friendships have a dominant member as surely as do packs of wolves. The 'Alpha' friend is usually quite easy to distinguish."

He asserts that "in the most highly modernized contexts, all relatively nonhierarchical relationships are embedded in a general setting of hierarchical ones." It's human nature. So it's hard to avoid any hierarchy in relationships in general. Does this sound familiar of the relationships in your life?

Basically a definitive egalitarian relationship maintains that both partners are equal, both have the same value. Based



on that definition, L/S partners *are* equal, yet the relationship *has* a hierarchy. Therefore L/S relationships could be considered "Equal Hierarchies."

L/S relationships are absolutely not about a question of equality. I can't tell you how many times I've heard people say that L/S would never work for them because they want to be "equals" in their relationship. Yet these are the people who tend to be offended during their experiences of more power struggles and less equanimity in their relationships! Often non-L/S partners can feel treated with less respect or regard than they treat the other person with.

***Be assured that both partners in a Leading/Supportive relationship are equal.*** L/S is an equal cooperative partnership. It's up to the individuals to keep a balance with the co-partnership and to treat each other as valuable equals.

*Side note:* If someone is reading this who has consensually agreed with their partner that one of you will not be referred to or treated as an "equal" human being, that is completely your prerogative; and it means that one partner agreed to devalue themselves in the context of the relationship for whatever reason. It doesn't necessarily establish in truth that literally, you both aren't equal.

Getting back, both L/S partners bring their strong points to the table as equals and use them compatibly while getting their individual needs and wants met through service.

Yes, that does read *both, equal* and *service*.

There are many other things that people assume about this kind of relationship, and it's just not true. These assumptions and misunderstandings cause discrimination, confusion, strained relationships, and loss of friends and family. The latter is a serious issue in L/S relationships.

Contrary to popular leanings, L/S is an appropriate relationship type for people who desire equality for women and men as well. This enables L-type women to step up and lead their family in a way that is caring and nurturing, just like an L-type partner should do in a healthy L/S relationship. This also gives S-type woman the freedom to answer her call to service as a supportive partner for the family. This is a choice for all men and women who are L/S partners.

Dr. Brad Sagarin, a professor of social and evolutionary psychology at Northern Illinois University, asserts that the S-type partner is "a fully-consensual entity" and "an equal partner in the negotiation of this relationship."

## **Who really has Control?**

Remember instead of "giving up control," the S-type gives over some control by willingly shifting it to the L-type in the continuous Control Shift.

But even people in these types of relationships over-simplify the dynamic. For example, their take on it is, in so many words, that one makes all of the decisions for the other one in exchange for deference and service. This is just not the case, not even close.

They each stay in their own power. They both have their own choices about the dynamics of the relationship. Each one brings their own service to the table. The partners are connected and compatible as they each serve each other. They support one another to come into their own person as they are meant to be.

Here's a point to consider: The L-type is often responsible to make the final determinations based on each partner's needs, wants, boundaries, enjoyment. Also, the L-type feels a need to receive caring, attention, and service from their S-type partner. Consequently, the nature of this relationship would prompt and require the L-type to be absolutely and heavily influenced by their S-type partner.

Quite often L/S-types consider their partner to be the single most influential person in their lives.

If the S-type is having issues of concern or difficulty, the nature of a healthy L/S relationship dictates that this gets addressed with the L-type's attention as soon as possible.

The ultimate answer is they both have control. This answer is not as obvious as it is to those who do it right.

An interesting discovery I made was finding out how common it is for the S-type to want to be involved in the decision making process, yet clearly wanting their L-type

partner to be the one to make most of the final decisions that they would both adhere to.

In the survey, when asked if they wanted to be the partner to make the final decisions, nearly all of the S-type respondents said "no." They want to defer that to their L-type partner.

On the other hand, when asked if they want to have a part in the decision-making process for a decision that would affect both partners, 79.7% of S-type partners said "yes."

So who is really in control? The answer may be obvious to some; to others, there may not be an answer.

## **How Common is This and Does it Last?**

There are plenty of people who disapprove and don't think L/S relationships work. The people who think L/S is a bogus form of a relationship often fall into two categories: people who are non-L/S and those who are fascinated with it (who may be an L/S-type without living it). The latter category includes those L/S-types who tried to have this type of relationship with a non-L/S partner.

The L/S relationship is not well understood in today's contemporary mainstream consciousness. While formal scientific studies on this subject are welcome, we don't yet know the percentage of L/S couples versus non-L/S couples.

However, every person I've talked with about this subject over the years either knows of people who are L/S-types or they are L/S-types themselves. I've not come across one person who said they do not know someone who is either one of the two types.

All over the world, there are organizations, events, message boards, websites, mailing lists, and memberships of L/S-type partners and couples discussing this type of relationship. Even in recent history some of our most powerful leaders seem to be happy in L/S marriages.

As a relationship expert with knowledge of L/S, I've often been able to predict which new celebrity relationships may end early based on their mismatch of L/S and non-L/S partners. As well, I've can spot high profile couples who are "L/S-Compatible"; one partner is the S-type and the other is the L-type.

As for how long it lasts, we have no official record on that yet. So let's get a better idea of the longevity of L/S relationships:

The average non-married relationship is significantly less than a year; the average marriage in the U.S. lasts 8 years.

In our survey, 69.3% of L/S respondents said their longest relationship had been between 6 years to over 30 years (30.4% being 11-20 years). While there was no hard evidence that they last longer than other types of relationships, there is no evidence so far that shows that they are of less duration than the average lengths of non-L/S relationships.

Earlier, I discussed the advantages that L/S relationships have. It may be possible that what is naturally built into the dynamic gives the relationship a better chance at success.

# The Profiles

The following are the only known documented profiles of S-type and L-type partners. They were developed with information based on the following:

- L/S relationship survey of 335 respondents mentioned in the beginning of this book
- Information from case studies of my L/S clients
- 23 years of research of tens of thousands of those who consider themselves either of the two partner types (either in relationships or single)
- Interviews of respondents and mental health professionals
- Available informative literature or documentation on this dynamic
- And nearly half a century of personal experience and observation

Both types can be either male or female, and can have either traditional or non-traditional backgrounds or lifestyles. They can be the main income earner of the household, or may not earn an income at all. They may or may not be a leader in their job or career. Often, outsiders can't initially discern that someone is an S-type or an L-type!

While there are many variations between individuals, there are traits, attitudes, and behaviors that are common to each type.

The profiles are referring to healthy, loving and successful Leading and Supportive Relationships. More than one profile point may seem similar at first but each one is specific and distinct. Also, some of these points are not exclusive to L/S partners or L/S relationships.

Note: While it's rare for an L/S partner to match up with all of the points in their profile, if you consider yourself either an S-type or L-type, you will most likely relate to and identify with many of the items in your category.

You may feel that the category fits you and the other category describes in large part the type of partner you are attracted to. Please remember that these profile points describe L/S partners by nature; some may or may not describe them in their current relationship.

These profiles contain some well-known and some unexpected (contrary to popular belief) characteristics of the two types of L/S partners. Remember this is a guideline to help you better understand yourself as a partner and/or your partner or anyone else you care about who is in an L/S relationship. This can also help L/S-types search for an ideal partner or help with improvement with their existing relationship.

If you can relate to either type after reading this and:

Some of the points may describe you by nature but don't describe you in the present, you may not be happy in your relationship and I urge open communication with your partner.

Relate to statements that you would like to be representative of you, then that may represent areas that it's time for you to work on improving or strengthening.



## **The Supportive Partner Profile (S-type)**

**1)** *S-types are not weak individuals. They are very tough in spirit and endurance.* Some people treat them as if they are easily led and don't have their own direction. When they truly connect with a loving source who can support and guide them to become who they are meant to be, they are doing what comes naturally and what is in their best interest. Many S-types are successful in positions or roles outside of their relationships that require them to make big decisions and carry a significant amount of responsibility and obligations as an authority. Some of them are highly-ranked leaders in their fields.

**2)** *S-types are not weak partners. It takes much strength and dedication to be in a healthy L/S relationship.* In fact, they are the number one and closest support to their L-type partner. The S-type often has to be the calm in the storm in difficult times. They work hard through it and are still there to be leaned on by their partner.

**3)** *They do have opinions and beliefs; they do make their own choices.* They choose an L/S relationship for themselves. They choose who they believe is a compatible L-type partner, because that is most appealing to them and works best for them. Any other type of partner or relationship feels uncomfortable, insecure and wrong for them. Further, they are viscerally repelled by potential suitors who are S-types.

**4)** *They don't seem to care what other people think about their relationship or partner.* They purposely chose both the person they are with and the type of relationship they are in, without concern for others' opinions. When they refer to their partner to anyone, they tend to speak very highly or appreciative of them. They are also less likely to be judgmental about other relationships that definitely wouldn't work for them.

**5)** *It is extremely important to S-types that their needs, beliefs, preferences and input are high priority to their partner.* It's common to hear from an S-type that their partner really cares about and is aware of what makes them happy and what is important to them.

**6)** *S-types prefer not to make the final decisions for the couple.* They are flexible and less particular about as many things as their partner may be. However, research shows that they do prefer to be involved and considered in the decision making process between partners.

**7)** *They are very supportive and patient with their partner's decisions, needs, and behavior.* They don't spend time being critical and second-guessing when their L-type partner has decided on something. When they're in, they are in all the way, as they contribute to the peace and enjoyment with their loved ones. They often help to support decisions and do what they can to make it happen.

**8)** *Decisiveness, direction and guidance from their partner makes them feel secure and loved.* (This is very different from an L-type!) With their faith in their partner and being included in the overall plan, they follow direction that both feel will be helpful and productive.

**9)** *When it comes to their close relationships, they avoid conflict and are generally non-confrontative in nature.* They want a peaceful, loving partnership. However, it is important that S-types communicate to get their needs met or addressed.

**10)** *Service to their partner is of great priority to them and they take it very seriously.* Just about every means of support they have to give is unhesitatingly and consistently available to their partner when needed. An S-type finds ways to relieve their partner's burdens, stress or grief. Some of them are heavily service-oriented, and structure their

days around service in their relationship. This is another tribute to their perseverance and dedication.

**11)** *They don't often ask for much for themselves.* However, when they do express a want or need, it's important to them that it be addressed. They don't mind nor complain about working hard and taking on more than what may be their fair share at times. S-types don't keep score. They are not the kind of people who want extravagant gifts or demand constant attention. The things that really matter to them are truly significant and not just distractions. When something is important to them, they depend on their partner to be open and willing to understand and address it with them.

**12)** *They need to feel valued.* It's vital to them that their partner knows and shows them how valuable they are, both as a person and as a partner. Knowing that they are good for their partner and family is priceless. Being deeply loved, truly needed and appreciated as who they are, is important life purpose for them.

**13)** *It hurts them deeply when their partner is upset or disappointed with them.* This is something that is most troubling to them. It's important that this situation is dealt with carefully and openly. This issue affects an S-type's sense of well-being, self-esteem and even their identity.

**14)** *They are known to be more open to unexpected change and new experiences.* They enthusiastically take on new interests and hobbies that their partner is interested in sharing with them. They tend to cope with sudden or different circumstances with less stress. They are fluid and adapt well; and are willing to change and adjust for the good of their partner, relationship and family.

**15)** *They tend to be more open and forth-coming with others in regard to information about themselves than their partner is.* They more easily volunteer information about their lives. They don't seem as guarded or secretive about

family, latest developments, etc., with people they make a comfortable connection with.

**16)** *They tend to be comfortable giving full disclosure of their lives to their partner;* they are open and honest with them. Once they are comfortable with and trusting of their romantic interest, they are like an open book.

**17)** *They are truly devoted and give their all for the one they love.* They are staunchly loyal and trusting with their hearts when they find someone they feel is right for them. This relationship is their priority. It is a foundation that branches off into nearly all of the other parts of who they are and who they want to be. They feel as if they are a part of a bigger purpose in this relationship. They have a deep love connection and are troubled when their partner isn't happy.

**18)** *Initially they are often more open and forthcoming about their romantic interest and feelings for their potential partner than the L-type is.* They may be the first one who is more demonstrative with affection and verbally expresses their feelings to their new love interest.

**19)** *They tend to see the good in their partner and they love when their partner is vulnerable with them.* When they love their partner, they love just about everything about them completely. In healthy L/S relationships, it's truly loving someone for who they are and seeing the best in them. They are grateful and accepting when their partner shows their fragility, vulnerability and child-like side. Their tolerance with their partner is very strong.

**20)** *They are the peacekeepers to those they love.* They can be found circumventing conflict in their household and helping to defuse or shrug off a hurtful action or word. S-types tend to be sensitive to their partner's feelings and are more comforting and giving than critical or judging.

**21)** *They are patient and don't hold many grudges in their L/S relationship.* They are very forgiving and usually get over hurtful flare-ups with people. They focus on their gratitude for the person they love by default before being negative and resentful. When this changes, there is usually something wrong because what is important to them is not being properly addressed.

**22)** *They are optimistic and hopeful by nature.* They aren't known to sweat the small stuff in life. They tend not to focus on the things in life that aren't important to them. Part of this is being able to depend on a partner who will help decide what is important for the couple/family to focus on. This positive focus can set the tone for the productivity and success for the family.

**23)** *They take their work, personal, and family responsibilities seriously.* They appreciate and honor team dynamics. The S-type is a born team player. They are consistent with their energy in areas of responsibility for the household, especially as long as they feel supported and loved by their L-type partner.

**24)** *They greatly appreciate their partner being clear and direct with communication, so there are no doubts about what the expectations or intentions are.* There is little to no risk of misunderstanding on both parts when their L-type partner has been precise and clear on direction or plans.

**25)** *They appreciate the freedom that comes from structure, surrender and personal discipline.* They are most able to be their most effective selves when they utilize these for their benefit.

**26)** *They may have to learn the lesson of initially letting a potential partner earn their trust, instead of quickly giving it away.* Some people can present as L-types but are not; they turn out to be selfish and negligent as a partner. This can result in the S-type ultimately having to take over the L-type

responsibilities in the relationship and are unable to be the partner that they really truly are.

**27)** *They may become negligent with or withdrawn from their partner if they feel their wants/needs aren't being addressed.* They may test the resolve and boundaries of their partner; they may take away the parts of control that they previously gave over. This is often to protect themselves – out of perceived necessity; and to make sure they are truly in a safe place with the partner they are with.

## **The Leading Partner Profile (L-type)**

**1)** *They have natural dominant traits and seem comfortable and confident when using them.* Most of these traits are discovered in youth or in an early relationship. Although some L-types are comfortable leading and advising in various parts of life, their dominant behaviors are primarily used in a healthy relationship with their S-type partner.

**2)** *As mature adults, they are not domineering by nature.* Dominant does not mean "domineering." They can be very polite, gracious, gentle and even subdued around others. They protect and guide their partner and loved ones who they feel responsibility for. They don't necessarily take the dominant role in friendships or in lateral relationships at work.

**3)** *They can be extremely nurturing and many are very responsive to their loved one's feelings.* The nurturing they provide may be with thoughtfulness through gentle words, demeanor or touch. Many of them are in the healing and health care fields, or spiritual teachers. They can be empathic and understanding of their partner (foremost), and of others.

**4)** *They are highly curious and inquisitive of their potential or long-term partner.* In a manner of speaking; they go to the "*University of (insert partner's name here)*". The more they know and understand them, the better they can love and serve them well. Their partner will get asked more questions about their lives than they ever expected! The L-type keenly observes to get to know their partner thoroughly so they can make decisions and attend to details in careful and loving consideration of them. They ask clarifying questions about what their partner needs, wants, what their passions are, and what lights them up.

**5)** *They are not selfish with their loved ones and can be extremely generous with energy, time, and finances.* The L-

type doesn't use their partner for their own selfish reasons. They are fiercely devoted to their partner and feel a strong responsibility for their well-being and happiness.

**6)** *They are very accommodating with a potential partner.* They know what a valuable find the right S-type partner is and they choose to impress that person with what they can do for and be for them. Besides being extra-attentive, they want to help keep their partner happy and feeling good about themselves. They present with true thoughtful effort, not with lies or fakery.

**7)** *They place an importance on follow-through and follow-up from their partners, when both have agreed on an issue and a decision has been made.* For optimum function and best goal achievement, they count on this. However, most don't care to micro-manage. They prefer to trust that their partner will follow through after mutual agreement.

**8)** *They accept but feel the weight of their responsibilities in a leadership position with their partner and immediate family.* Despite the stress of the responsibilities as the leader in the relationship, they are in continuous service to their partner and step into their natural abilities to lead, guide, protect, and direct. They delegate but also carry their own separate load of responsibilities.

**9)** *They are dedicated team players and can even be excellent followers in other areas of life.* They often have a healthy respect and regard for what they consider is fair authority as well as for group organization and cohesiveness.

**10)** *They are non-invasive and careful when relating to others; they may seem like the quiet or shy member of the couple until they get to know someone.* They may even seem or be shy or introverted in general. Meanwhile, they are observing and listening. They are respectful of others and their boundaries.



**11)** *They are very protective of their partner, relationship, and household family.* They tend to have personal trust issues so they may come off as more jaded than S-types and are wary of any negative influences. They don't like to see their partner get taken advantage of or taken for granted. Because of this, they may seem territorial at times.

**12)** *It's important to the L-type that they earn trust from their partner; they will not ask for or demand it up front.* They will not expect to be trusted until the S-type feels safe trusting them. The L-type is truly genuine with their intentions and what they have to offer. They are happy to develop that trust bond, as trust is such a key relationship component for them.

**13)** *They decide to implement numerous changes in regard to their partner or the relationship.* They see their partner's great potential for being who they are meant to be. They treasure them and know they are powerful and talented/gifted. So they will support, encourage and at times push their partner to go to another level of being better at what they do and being better as who they are as a person. This is one way they serve; it's their obligation and strength.

**14)** *They feel safe, secure and valued when their partners trust them to lead and make decisions in the areas agreed on by both.* This is a strong life purpose for them and they take it very seriously.

**15)** *They do not strive to isolate their loved one from friends and family.* They appreciate that their partner has positive and loving influences in their life, and they respect family and friend bonds. Their initial approach with their S-type partner's family and friends is one of respect, appreciation, and cooperation. They may also be helpful and generous. A change from this often depends on the other friend or family member's treatment of them and/or their partner.

**16)** *L-types prefer to have control over their environment and change is more difficult for them.* They like to arrange or know details beforehand of upcoming situations. They prefer to be prepared for whatever may possibly come up. Some are particular about their personal space in terms of comfort, convenience, and peacefulness.

**17)** *They have a strong sense of fairness and may seem opinionated on subjects that are important to them.* They are very clear about this with those they are close to. They have a conscientious inner-compass but can still be saddled with guilt easily, even if they don't show it. Of course the more open-minded L-types give much thought to both their position and other points of view. They can respect that different ways of life and beliefs work for different people.

**18)** *They tend to be extremely self-reflective and self-motivating.* Even if they may not voice it often, their inner dialogue reviews their past, present, and future challenges. They value reaching toward their goals or improvement for the individuals and the whole of their household. They may get caught in negative self-criticism and can be very hard on themselves.

**19)** *They are often above-average in "emotional sensitivity."* Yes, they are sensitive and get their feelings hurt more easily! Some of these "sensitives" may seem introverted, but often they are being extra cautious and protective of themselves and their energy. Hopefully, they are able to use the gifts that sensitivity offers (intuition, creativity, compassion, etc.) so they don't take their low self-esteem out on their partner. They may also tend to withdraw when they feel hurt.

**20)** *They don't readily show or initially admit vulnerability, and when they are vulnerable, it's usually only with their partner.* They may not be comfortable showing fear or "weakness," and it's a big deal for them to ask for help.

They often need encouragement to open up to their S-type partner. However, it should be noted that they are very attentive to how help is offered and given to them.

**21)** *They lean on their S-type partner, and they can lean hard.* To them, their partner provides a strong shoulder, acceptance, and a safe place in the world. To get relief from responsibilities and sensitivities, this is where they go, even if they don't voice it.

**22)** *When they open up, they may be charming, even charismatic and/or very convincing individuals, with generally good intentions.* They may seem worldly or wise. They are confident in what they know and they use it usefully. They also may have a unique stance on life that can be very interesting to an S-type. They know they have something to bring to the table in a relationship. When they know and own who they are, it's very attractive.

**23)** *They can be very stubborn and seem overbearing at times.* Some describe them as being immovable when they want to make a point. Being purposeful by nature, L-type partners may see this as necessary. Many may not admit fault readily and tend to rarely offer a direct and spoken apology. This ego-based behavior may be to avoid showing "weakness" or vulnerability. They usually find that when they open up, admit, and apologize that it's very well-received and freeing for them.

**24)** *It's important to them that they are a positive influence on the life of their partner.* This usually begins from a place of leading, advising, motivating, troubleshooting, and sharing information. From the heart, they like to be instrumental in helping their partner improve the quality of their lives. When their partner is receptive and responsive to this gift, the L-type feels more loved and valuable.

**25)** *They are willing to give and sacrifice what they have, but not who they are.* They have a strong sense of self and a

strong sense of ethics. However, they will listen to changes that are humbly or respectfully offered, due to their partner's preferences or suggestions. They will process the information and quite often agree.

**26)** *They feel the need to be affirmed, appreciated and comforted.* They like heaps of compliments and encouragement from the one they love. Many L-types love to be cared for with touch and generally prefer gentle affection from their partner.

**27)** *They love to be cared for by being served in ways that they don't usually care to do themselves.* They are the ones who oversee and process thoroughly so they can make final decisions or implement important changes in the relationship and the household. They often foresee potential issues of concern and put a plan of preventative action in place. They inherently feel a large responsibility for their partner's and family's happiness. So it's extremely helpful and a significant stress relief for them when some of their daily needs are taken care of.

**28)** *It hurts them deeply when their S-type partner withdraws from or rejects their direction or influence, especially with their actions.* This can be the fastest and most extreme method of pushing away an L-type partner. Besides experiencing a breach of trust when an agreement is broken, they feel their service is being unappreciated and rejected.

## **Surprises**

As you have learned, there are common traits and behaviors about L/S partners that are not conventionally known.

Southern California psychotherapist Levine asserts that S-type partners are frequently "strong and powerful, able to make decisions and are often found in leadership or service-oriented careers and positions."

Many S-type partners explain that they have so much responsibility and obligation with decision making and leadership at work that they are more than relieved to come home to their trusted partner making many of the decisions and addressing the details in home and personal life. No matter what they do for their career or livelihood, it's common for an S-type partner to prefer and want this leadership in their primary personal relationship, even though other relationships and areas of their lives may be different.

Besides their jobs, of course there are times when S-types make decisions for their family, their relationship and for themselves. Wanting to be "on the same page" as their partner, they are thoughtful of what their L-type partner's point of view may be if they are not able to communicate with them about it.

As for L-type partner surprises, it turns out that their behaviors are far from the common beliefs that typify them as domineering, selfish, unyielding, etc.

Kate Loree, LMFT, ATR, MBA, a therapist in Encino California, says that some of the healthiest L-type partners who she has met have been "very caring, nurturing people. If you were to have coffee with them, you'd be struck by how soft and calming their manner is. They are often in touch with their feminine side. Empathy is one of their main strengths."

As for S-type women, Loree adds they "often have very feminist inclinations" and are "very female-centered." She notes that "many are leaders outside of their primary relationship."

Tamara Pincus, LICSW, a psychotherapist in Washington, D.C. agrees. She explains that "...for women who are deep in the feminist movement – as an S-type feminist – just because you are supporting doesn't mean that you think all women should be supporting. The supporting role feels right for you. The great thing about the feminist movement is that women have that choice."

Dr. Stephen Mathis, a clinical psychologist in Atlanta, Georgia, states that "most S-types in order to be successful and be a good partner are sharp, smart and strong emotionally." He agrees that credit goes to the men who are S-types and points out that being an S-type "has nothing to do with inner weakness, it's just the opposite. They maintain their integrity and are competent, multi-tasking. They have an inner strength."

In fact some say that S-types are "strong enough to submit." They are not afraid of someone who has a strong, willful and confident personality. In fact that's what they want in a partner!

The L-type partner tends to have a strong sense of personal morals and values – and will strive to do right by those ethics. When they don't, they are very often hard on themselves. In fact, Dr. Mathis states that "most true dominant partners tend to have a version of obsessive compulsive tendencies, as most of them are conscientious and have an innate sense of right and wrong."

They depend greatly on their S-type partner in a number of ways; especially needing their support personally. L-types also need validation and appreciation for their position in the relationship and they heavily depend on the S-type for

the well-being and consistency of the relationship. Studies have been done that show higher levels of cortisol due to stress on the leaders of the pack. They are heavily invested in the shared purpose of the fulfilling L/S relationship. They need support!

L-types are very sensitive people and learn to be very guarded with their hearts. S-types are very resilient and are the ones to help L-types open their hearts.

Each partner has opposite strengths and virtues that complement the other, which can fit like a solved puzzle with interlocking pieces; each of a different shape and form. Below is a list of things that each partner has in common in a healthy, loving long-term Leading and Supportive Relationship. You may notice aspects that are just like other healthy relationships which all have some of the same components.

## **Both or Either**

- Remember, both types may find themselves in L/S-type friendships or business partnerships which may be beneficial for that relationship. However, L/S partners are not necessarily submissive or dominant with other people! They are L/S-types primarily in their personal relationship, while in other relationships they can be the opposite type.
- Both types can have great empathy for their partners and others. This understanding helps the L-type guide and the S-type understand the important ways they are needed at different times in the relationship.
- Being very purposeful in the selection of their mate, they often have a great appreciation and respect for each other. Consider that each of them is understood and accepted by their partner in ways no one else does. Of course they trust their partner above any other and are greatly influenced by them. They both are extremely sensitive to the energy and mood of the other and are deeply troubled when their significant other is disappointed or unhappy with them. They absolutely love to be praised and shown appreciation by their partner for their efforts and service to their family.
- Neither can be the Leading or Supportive person they were meant to be without their counterpart that is their corresponding "type." Non-L/S relationships are difficult for them or just don't work.
- Both are dedicated to serving the other partner with their natural strengths and abilities.
- Both keep their partners at a high priority in their life, whether it's spoken or unspoken.
- They are in clear negotiation with each other any time it is necessary or helpful.



- They aren't as easily influenced by other people's relationships; their L/S-dynamic is what they focus on, as that's what is natural to them.
- Both tend to provide a safe space for the other and appreciate when their partner shares their vulnerabilities and child-like feelings and emotions with them.
- Both consistently work to improve themselves and their relationship; they strive to address and fulfill the individual needs and priorities of their partner. They help their partner feel appreciated, valued, needed, loved, and accepted consistently.
- Both are protective of their partner and have their partner's best interest in mind. Both partners outwardly appreciate, acknowledge, and validate each other. They strive to have clearer understanding of their own relationship type, as well as their partner's relationship type. They discuss issues together at length to prevent misunderstanding.

## **How to Tell Which "Type" Someone Is**

There are a number of ways to tell if someone is an S-type or L-type.

The best suggestion is to use the above profiles for reference. Do you feel that you have *most* of the aspects of one profile or relate to one of the profiles enough that it feels like a fit? Are you attracted to some of the aspects of the profile of the opposite type in more ways than you are attracted to other partner types?

Some couples who know they have a dynamic like this discuss these profiles with each other. Some counselors and facilitators ask clients questions based on the profiles. I use them in my work to help clients determine whether they identify with either type.

I often listen as clients describe themselves as a partner and what they like about their existing or ideal partner. If it matches enough to one of the profiles, we discuss it further, and they decide whether or not a profile fits.

Sure, there are telling signs beyond the L/S profiles. For instance, the L-type partner does not like to be told what to do by their partner! They will either instantly refuse or grumble about it.

Also, people who sign or write their name starting with lower-case letters tend to be S-types. Then there is the subject of pets. L-types more often (not always!) seem to enjoy their pets more if they are strictly and thoroughly trained. Not so much for S-types, it's just not too important to them.

I've met many who are the oldest child of a large family who are L-types. The birth order doesn't matter as much as the amount of responsibility one felt for their other siblings and even for one or both parents. Youngest siblings can be L-types as well.

One way I found that works effectively also provides quite a fascinating reaction. I give them an example of a situation and see how they respond, both physically and verbally.

Here's one of the examples I use:

Imagine that your partner calls you in the middle of the day and says, "Get dressed up and be ready to go by 6:30 p.m. I'm going to take you out for the evening!" (For those of you with kids, assume there would be dependable babysitting arranged).

What would your response be?

Believe it or not, just the physical response can be very telling: S-types are the most responsive. Their reaction has included: straightening their posture; a huge, wide smile crosses their face; and they looked thrilled and even excited. Verbally, they affirm that they would be so happy to have that said to them and of course they would be ready to go! Most of them who have not had an L-type partner have identified with that as something they have always wanted. I have never gotten a negative or even curious reaction to this from an S-type.

L-types – not so much. They look confused and somewhat uncomfortable. They question the entire situation and say that they would want more information right away. They seem to be hesitant and doubtful about the entire idea.

Partners who are not either type usually don't seem affected as much and have a response that says something like: "Hmm, depends on the situation."

Try it and see what reaction you get.

People are who they are, not necessarily who or what we perceive them to be. I have yet to find a study that focuses specifically on why some people are S-types or L-types. Is it nature, nurture, or both?

What's of more consequence at this point in time is understanding and acceptance for one's self and for others.

## Let's Talk About Sex

As stated earlier, this book is not about sex. However as sex is such an integral part of people's lives, we'll address this topic.

We're all such unique individuals with creative minds and different drives in life that send us in so many directions of discovery. Sexual-aggressiveness or adventurousness (or even lack of these) does not gauge which type of partner someone is. Either L/S-type can be variations of both. Either type of partner can be open-minded or have specific preferences.

I have found that the partner remains the S-type or L-type in all main areas of the relationship, including sex. L/S relationships have varied levels of sexual drive. Also, either partner can be the more aggressive partner sexually.

Many people may not realize that it's quite common for the *S-type* to be more of the aggressor and/or the initiator – and also very open-minded about romantic and sexual interests for the couple! That being said, L-types can be very romantic, creative, and adventurous, and they still have the final word. The couple wouldn't have it any other way.

Some theoretical opinions in society say women put themselves in sexually submissive and subordinate roles only because it's what they know traditionally. They revert to what society represents as "accepted."

However, not all women are submissive or S-types while not all men are L-types! There may *seem* to be more S-type women than men, but significant numbers of the general population of men are S-types; more than it may be assumed.

Also, some partners may be active in a more varied sex life, including experimenting with kinks and fetishes, while others have a happy traditional sex life. Going further, I've

worked with L/S people who range from having a very conservative intimate life to those who engage in BDSM (an acronym representing erotic or sexual practices for bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, and sadomasochism).

Those in the former category are as successful, loving, gentle and intelligent partners as the sexually conservative ones are. They also tend to be clearer with themselves and their partners about what type partner they are and about their relationship being L/S (Dominant and submissive, as they refer to it).

What many people may not consider is that S-types who "submit" in bed have a great situation! They are *not* de-valuing themselves; in fact it's just the opposite! They are able to enjoy the freedom from obligation or self-conscious constraints. S-types are free just to be themselves and to feel pleasure in the liberating experience while they have all of their loved one's attention and passion focused on them. They don't have to do anything they absolutely do not want to do, making this the ultimate form of control. This is power.

# The Biggest Problem for L/S Relationships

*(Hint - it's Not an Inside Job)*

In our study, Leading and Supportive respondents were asked about the biggest problems they experienced in regard to their L/S relationships. The overwhelming answer – nearly 80% – answered that issues with people *outside* of their relationship caused the most problems for the relationship.

Lisa and Karen are friends meeting for lunch to catch up. They begin to talk about upcoming events with their families.

Karen: "Hey why don't you join us on our boat this weekend; it would be fun!"

Lisa: "That sounds great, thanks Karen. I'll ask Brad about that and let you know. Sometimes he likes to take it easy and enjoy the pool."

Karen: "Ok, let me know. By the way, I started working on the charity luncheon for next month. Dave isn't happy about it; he says I take on too many projects, but you know how I am. When I want to do something I do it. Did you decide if you want to help organize it?"

Lisa: "I'm still interested, but I have to remember to discuss that with Brad."

Does this sound familiar? At this point, it is very common for someone like Lisa's friend, Karen, to think Lisa really doesn't have much say or freedom in her life because of her husband. Yet she seems happy with her relationship and appears to feel loved by Brad.

Perhaps an interesting take on this is that some of the things Karen, the non-L/S person, said may seem unusual or

even uncomfortable to Lisa, to whom L/S is *normal*. If both partners seem happy and satisfied with their partner, it's important for friends and families to help support people who are in these L/S relationships and not judge them as bad, oppressive or wrong.



## **It May Not Be What You Think!**

There is the common impression that the S-type partner is weak of will, ignorant, and not wise enough to choose a partner and get what they want in a relationship. Some see them as selling themselves out because they just don't have the ability to do what is right for them.

Further, people misunderstand and think that the L-type is abusing or manipulating their partner when this is really not the case. To the contrary, the S-type is more likely to be taken advantage of or abused by a non-L-type.

S-types are focused and very clear on whom and what type of relationship they want. I've often heard of them being accused of not thinking for themselves, when in fact they are exercising their choices in love, perhaps more than those who are critical of them!

Unlike so many people who attract unhealthy relationships, healthy S-types are aware of their desire to feel valuable and needed. They pursue those needs with the person they see L-type traits in. As they are feeling loved, they are able to see the wonderful traits in their partner that others may never have known. They appreciate and encourage these traits. S-types play a huge role in supporting confidence and potential in their L-type partner.

Many people who are not familiar with this relationship find it easy to vilify the L-type partner. They feel the L-type partner is taking advantage of their loved one or friend and is taking the S-type away from them. Therefore, this usually sensitive, loving L-type is seen as selfishly and cruelly causing hurt throughout the family.

What family and friends don't see is that early on in the relationship, the S-type partner wants and encourages their L-type to take control in the decision-making areas and to be the confident leader for the good of the partnership and

immediate family unit. So with a mutual understanding and out of love, caring, and responsibility, the L-type rises to this opportunity and serves in the way they do best by taking a leadership role. They address the needs and wants of their partner and strive for the potential for them to be loved better, live better, be a better person and be happier than they ever have been. This often includes the thoughtfulness they graciously extend to their partner's friends and family.

But no matter how good the L-type's intentions are, those outside their household family often do not appreciate them. This new scenario can cause *change* within the dynamics of the S-type's friends and family. A backlash happens with the following people in the S-type's life:

- The overly concerned: Those who are genuinely concerned, but that's based on little to no understanding of L/S relationships. Misunderstanding of something unfamiliar can lead to judgment and discrimination;
- Those envious of your happiness: Those who are not in a healthy, happy relationship and are envious or jealous of the S-type's happy relationship;
- The controlling ones: Those so used to having the S-type acquiesce and adjust to their whims and schedules, that when there are changes, they get angry and resent the L-type for being "selfish" and "controlling"
- The disingenuous ones: People who don't care as much about them as the S-type thought they did.

If you are in an L/S relationship and are having difficulty with a friend or family member because of your relationship, which category or categories do they fit into?

Even when peacemaking attempts are made by the L/S couple, the situation compounds as the friend/family member's critical judgment, bitterness, and unwillingness to

accept them continues. Sadly, this drives the L/S couple further away. This is painful for everyone. The individuals who are so critical have been perfectly free to make their own relationship choices in their lives. As well, it's nearly unheard of for an S-type to take a stand against someone else's relationship. This can seem like a double standard on the friend/family member's part when it comes to love.

### **Case Illustration**

John and Barb are a fun, loving couple with two children. They are having problems with John's mother, who does not seem to like Barb. She doesn't like that John defers to Barb and that she tends to make most of the decisions for their family. John's mother gets upset when they don't attend everything she plans, especially when she gives them only a few days of notice.

John is very happy to be with Barb and is upset with his mother about how she treats his wife.

The fact is that when Barb fell in love with John, she was grateful for the people who brought him into this world and raised him. She would have loved to feel like family with her in-laws and would have been a loving daughter-in-law to them.

How heart-breaking for Barb, John and their children to have this chasm between them because Barb's mother was uncomfortable with and offended by her son's relationship dynamics.

Other times, the discrimination L/S couples deal with is present as an undertone and could be just as hurtful and harmful. Some friends have a hard time understanding and accepting, and some seem to think that their friends' L/S relationship is a bad thing.

Leading and Supportive partners do not typically discriminate against others for their various types of

relationships. Acceptance that we all have differences, even in relationships, is very bonding and uniting.

### **Case Illustration**

A client, Rodger, is an officer in the Marines. He loves his wife Sheila and her two sons from another marriage. He respects her and depends on her feedback and advisement about his education and career. With all of his responsibilities, he appreciates that Sheila decides where and when they will go on family outings and vacations. If you haven't guessed, Rodger is the S-type.

He is strong, decisive, brave, and loyal. His job requires him to be a dominant and proactive leader.

But Rodger's friends express their disapproval from time to time and try to encourage him to "be a man and stand up to her more." They disrespect him, his wife, and his marriage when they treat him like this.

The problems usually manifest themselves when friends and/or family members of the S-type misunderstand the relationship and the L-type partner. Sometimes the L/S couple can feel bullied. People make snap judgments and try to turn the S-type against their partner. Again, this can happen from concern or from jealousy. If they didn't feel either of these, wouldn't they appreciate seeing the bond that the L/S couple has?

Sometimes the S-type's family or friends go so far as to mistreat and convince others to mistreat and/or avoid (and convince others to do the same) the L-type partner at events and family functions. They insult one or both partners and tell the S-type that their partner is controlling them and they have no mind of their own. They criticize the S-type for deferring to their partner on decisions, plans, and even new hobbies and interests with their L-type partner.

Note to loved ones of an L/S partner: Yes, your son or daughter, brother or sister, etc. may prefer to (and may have requested to) defer to their partner in general. They may appreciate being given direct orders – only by their significant other – so their task or request is clear to them and leaves no room for confusion. Others like to be asked politely. They are still the same person that you know and love.

What would be more helpful – and more realistic – would be to observe with a few simple questions in mind:

Does your friend/family member seem happy with their relationship?

Does your friend/family member seem to feel loved and cared for?

Does your friend/family member seem to get their needs/wants addressed in their relationship?

If so, what can you do to support them, instead of alienating them from you? Because if you don't support them, it will take a toll on everyone involved, and your relationship with the family member or friend that you love will suffer or be destroyed. Let's be realistic: The S-type partner won't leave their L-type partner because other people disapprove!

If you know someone you care about who may be in this type of relationship and they appear to feel loved and happy in their relationship, they would probably greatly appreciate your support. If you love and care about them, even if you may not be able to understand, you can try to accept that they feel this is right for them. Try to be happy for them as they have found a relationship in mutual love that works for them.

Often, L/S partners feel they have to be more distant and closed off from others because of the issues of being unaccepted and misunderstood. This is not productive in

any way; it's harmful and divisive; often involving other innocent loved ones. If someone you care about is an S-type, ask them about their partner. Try to find the likable things, starting with the fact that they love and care for and are loyal to your loved one. Maybe you can reach out and include their partner more, and ask them about themselves. Thank them for making your loved one happy. As with any acceptance toward those who are different than you, this can create more closeness with friends and family.

## **The S-type Partner and Their Loved Ones**

As an S-type, you have an opportunity to help the people who may be or could become concerned about you to understand you, your life, and your partner better.

Let your loved ones know, on a repeated basis, that you have chosen this type of relationship/partner. Be clear that it makes you happy and creates a supportive environment for you to live to your potential as who you want to be.

As for people thinking the S-type is weak, vulnerable or being taken advantage of by their L-type partner: Sharon Golden, M.S., N.C.C., L.M.H.C, a counselor in Hewlett, New York, suggests that S-types explain that "this relationship works for them, as they each have their strengths and weaknesses, and they turn to each other to support what they are. It's not about one person being stronger or weaker."

For those who misunderstand and think there is harm or abuse toward the S-type partner, there is a helpful way to reassure their loved one. Northern Illinois University's Dr. Sagarin suggests that "They should be able to state in strong terms why they are in that relationship; it is by choice and of their own volition. They acknowledge why someone would have this impression and that it's wrong. They have negotiated the situation and if at some point, the relationship is no longer working for them, they will re-negotiate the relationship or they will leave. That will be an assurance."

### **Case Illustration**

A married client of mine, Sue, who is an S-type, told me she was hurt and confused when her friend, Mike, told her that his wife was uncomfortable being around Sue and her husband's L/S dynamics. Mike didn't seem to mind but his

wife decided they would end their friendship with Sue and her husband.

Could this be a case of an unspoken female-led L/S relationship? It's possible. A woman (such as Mike's wife, who may be the head of her household) observing a female friend getting told what to do, *may* be uncomfortable or intimidated.



## **L/S and Relating to Others**

Often when a couple has serious relationship problems, other couples who were previously their good friends withdraw or even avoid them. You may be familiar with how this happens with divorce or separation.

When married couples have problems and go through a divorce, their married friends avoid them and often end the friendships altogether. Sometimes the demise of their friend's marriage prompts them to have to face issues with their own relationship. So maintaining the friendship with the divorcing couple may take them out of their comfort level.

For those of you in Leading and Supportive Relationships: It's probably not about *you*; it's about *their* comfort level. Some family and friends back off because they are so uncomfortable (i.e. threatened, jealous, embarrassed, weirded out, afraid of that happening to them, etc.).

So for those relationships that you *really* want to keep, have some consideration for their comfort level – and think how you can adjust your behavior around them – at least for your own benefit.

It's not as difficult or unreasonable as it seems. Remember the example of how many adults are often extra careful about how they act and speak when they are around children? Some don't use swear words, talk about adult topics, or drink/smoke in front of kids. It doesn't mean they are giving up on being who they are.

Also keep in mind that many friends (and family) have limits to what they can tolerate or process. There may even be things that couples do that would seem bizarre and upsetting to you!

So consider that if a friend can only process the behavior/protocols of your relationship as abuse, regardless

of what you prefer them to think, they – and you – don't have much choice in the matter of mutual understanding.

Either way, there are some things that we wouldn't want to see our friends and family members do or say with their partners! There are ways to encourage the understanding and acceptance that you want.

Dr. Sagarin points out that some people have a "nonconsensual way of pulling other people into their 'dominant/submissiveness'; taking private aspects of your relationship and putting it on other people. At some level, there is a certain amount of discretion, norms of public interactions. Would you want to see some of the things they tell you about themselves?" He warns that "to express publicly what should be private has the potential for backfiring. If you are trying to get people to accept you as healthy and you do boundary-breaking things, it may not work out the way you want it to."

Talk to your friend/loved one/family member in their terms. They most likely see themselves as independent and make their own life choices just as you do. When helping others relate to your relationship, "try to connect the activities to things that people can relate to," advises Dr. Sagarin. "Avoid evangelical ways of presenting it. Most people can relate to having a hard day at work, having spent all day making difficult decisions, and what you really want is to have your partner say 'Let's do this for dinner'. If my partner is willing to take charge of this little thing, that's a relief."

Tell them that *your* relationship may not be what *they* would want or choose, but this is a viable relationship dynamic that you choose because it feels right for you. This is how you feel safe and loved. Everyone has their own way and you are not the only self-aware free-thinker who feels this way. You are being who you want to be. You have your eyes open and are living with integrity.

You may also want to explain to your family member/friend that they may not see your partner being loving/nurturing/vulnerable because they are a private person and they share it only with you. Your partner works hard toward supporting you to be who you want to be – but your family member/friend really may not see both sides.

They just need to understand that you chose your partner and the type of relationship you have, that you are happy, loved, and cared for. Reassure them that you bring any of your concerns or issues in life to your attentive L-type partner.

## **Calling Professional L/S Matchmakers**

Non-L/S friends and family mean well when they try their hand at novice match-making. However, when it comes to L/S partners, they just don't understand the different needs. Setting up their dear L/S bachelor/bachelorette buddy can end up being hurtful to the single recipient of their thoughtfulness. L/S-types often complain that the people they are matched up with are a turn-off for them. It often turns out that the person isn't a corresponding S-type or L-type to their type.

My suggestion to an L/S-type would be to watch out for a well-meaning loved one who thinks you are too "controlling" or "bossy" (if you are an L-type) or are too much of a "pushover" or easily-led" (if you are an S-type) and that they are going to find you someone who will snap you out of it.

Non-compatible L/S relationships (such as an S-type or L-type who is not with their corresponding partner type) are often unhealthy. Further, a relationship between an S-type and one who initially presents themselves as an L-type can be damaging and abusive.

The fear and stress that this causes can be overpowering and overwhelming for them, yet they may not share it because they don't want to seem weak or worry their loved ones.

I've talked with a number of S-types who feel that if the L-type makes a wrong decision or mistake, in some way it's still right, because they made the best call that they could, considering the circumstances. That is loyalty and true understanding.

## **Abuse**

As for abuse; there is no type of relationship that monopolizes actions or words of abuse. Abuse can be found in relationships between partners, co-workers, teammates, parents and children. Abuse has even been found in some relationships with people who are considered holy in their religion. As well, abuse can be perpetuated in L/S relationships; it can be either the S-type or L-type who suffers from it.

Also, both partners can be used and/or manipulated, as they are both major influences on each other.

I do not condone abuse or mistreatment of any kind. This is about healthy, loving L/S relationships. If you feel you are being abused, you are encouraged to be your own advocate and get support and help.

## Mental Health Professionals and L/S

Besides uninformed, misunderstanding friends and family, there is another harmful area for L/S people outside their relationship, also falling in the same area of *Biggest Problem for L/S Relationships: Other People*. Let's start with many (not all) mental health professionals.

Michael Giordano, LICSW, a psychotherapist in Washington, DC, explains that some L/S partners "do not seek therapy or help from mental health care professionals because they feel judged and pathologized for their relationships." In regards to therapy or counseling for L/S people, Giordano says "for it to be successful there has to be a lot of communication and understanding" between the therapist and the client.

Can you imagine going to a therapist or counselor for help with a personal issue, to get told that the relationship you are in is abusive or unhealthy and your partner, whom you love and trust, is not good for you – and that you should get out of the relationship?

This is what happens all too much with L/S partners; in fact the consensus is that it is too difficult to find L/S-understanding therapists and counselors worldwide. There are a small number of those professionals listed in the back, and hopefully, the list will grow. These professionals agree that there are too many mental health professionals who cause harm to people who are S-types and L-types in their primary relationships.

Psychotherapist Tamara Pincus says she has "seen a lot of people in the therapy community who say they can work with L/S relationships but when they get into the situation, they question or judge their clients. Things they say will show they are not entirely comfortable with the L/S relationship, when they say they are. People are very

reluctant to talk about their relationships if they are going to be judged."

Psychotherapist Richard Levine points out that some mental health professionals pathologize this type of relationship "out of their own projection, lack of information, and ignorance." He explains that "the very folks that take an oath to do no harm can be perpetrators of the greatest harm with the people who are seeking their support and help. To be 'authentically themselves' means going against the mainstream of society for such folks. This takes great courage and society often penalizes those who step outside of the herd. People engaged in these relationships often lose guardianship cases, lose child custody, lose family, lose jobs." Levine has observed this to "cause tremendous stress on folks who are 'wired' to participate in L/S relationships."

But some professionals don't realize what is often the main source of this stress. Levine explains, "Therapists often confuse the stress to be about the L/S relationship rather than the societal stigma the client is experiencing. I think it's important for the therapist to discern the difference and refrain from pathologizing the L/S relationship and 'wiring' of the person rather than recognizing that it's the societal stigma and discrimination that is causing the stress."

Again, the biggest problem that L/S partners have is people outside of the relationship who put their own negative judgments on the partners and the relationship!

Golden has known other therapists who try to fit S-types and L-types "into a mold." She explains that her work with clients involved in an L/S relationship "is to have you understand how it plays out and not necessarily say it's wrong - the same with any type of relationship. If it's working for you, recognize and understand why you bring it into your life. If it's a consensual relationship, I have no issues working with it fully for whatever it is."

Thankfully, there are professionals out there who are understanding and can help L/S partners. Hopefully the movement of open-mindedness with relationships will prompt people to look for mental health professionals who make themselves familiar with this viable relationship model.

A true story comes to mind of a couple who searched for a counselor about a different issue. On the phone, the counselor said that she was familiar with L/S (or Dominant and Submissive) Relationships. During their appointment, after the couple had taken equal turns speaking for a while, the counselor said she wanted to talk to the S-type partner separately so she could express herself freely.

The response to this came from a slightly offended S-type who spoke up without hesitation: "I'm fine saying whatever I need to say in front of him." She had no problem communicating about any of her thoughts with her partner present.

Many L-types hesitate to get help from a third party when it comes to their relationships because they already feel judged and misunderstood. They may even discourage their S-type partner from getting professional help. L-types can already have control issues and need to be treated fairly and with empathy in a safe, understanding environment. Hopefully, this help won't be so hard to find in the future.



# What They Each Need in a Partner

Below are common sentiments that S-types say they need and want from an L-type partner:

- My partner makes well-thought out and confident decisions. Before they decide for the couple, they usually research it, explore the options and get input from their partner.
- They are firm yet loving and must be trustworthy for their partner to be able to confidently and safely defer to them on many issues and situations.
- They provide structure and guidance so the relationship has optimum stability.
- They are extremely clear and concise in their requests of their partner; so there will be no confusion, misunderstanding or unnecessary disappointment.
- They actively get to know what makes their partner happy, what makes them thrive, what makes them shine, what they enjoy, who they want to be and what they need.
- They make attentive, open communication a priority and provide a safe environment for their partner to share their thoughts, feelings, wants and needs.
- They help nurture, motivate and advise their partner to become a better person, and fulfill their purpose, as they work toward their goals and aspirations.
- They help navigate new directions for each other to explore; anything from adventures and events to new hobbies, lifestyles and whatever the couple can explore toward their enrichment and enjoyment.

Here are a few *quotes* from people who identify themselves as an S-type partner in regard to what they need/want

expect from an L-type partner:

- "Someone I can respect, admire, trust, depend on and defer to; someone who will protect me and always has my best interest in mind."
- "Someone I can look up to, feeling safe, someone who nurtures my needs. I like the discipline and regiment. I feel I'm at my best when I fulfill my purpose."
- "Structure and guidance"
- "My work demands require me to be on all the time and handle every situation that comes up. It's nice to be able to turn that off and let someone else take charge."
- "For me, it's about control. Specifically, about a woman who enjoys taking control of me. But it has to be a loving, caring relationship..."
- "I need a lot of structure around me to feel secure and to encourage my personal growth and development."
- "Someone to be the ultimate authority, to know my role and position in the relationship, to have my expectations outlined and stated."
- "I expect that trust, honesty, communication, commitment, respect, honor and control will be present. A great deal of intelligence, patience and compassion is needed to obtain the level of trust needed to give control to another."
- "I want to be what I am. I need my partner to be the one in control. I need to take care of him and serve him."
- "My partner needs to be intelligent, respectful of my boundaries, thoughtful, creative, be able to gain my trust, and know me very well. He must be able to exert a sense of control over me in a loving and firm way."
- "I want/need my partner to understand me and where I'm coming from. ...for my partner to compromise in

situations, to listen, to use words and touch, to pay attention to my feelings; to be open and vulnerable with me."

- "I need a strong sense of family and safety within that circle. I need to feel special, in very specific ways, to someone that has the ability to love me strongly and the ability to help me want to become a better person. I need encouragement and reassurance, and I need someone with a strong sense of intuition."

Below are common sentiments that L-types say they need and want from an S-type partner:

- They are completely transparent and open with their partner. They are open with who they are, and with their wants/needs.
- They have a willingness to serve in all the ways they can serve best in the relationship.
- Of course they have their own power as a person and as a partner. They choose to use that power toward service and support in their relationship. Some of their control is given to their loving partner as the overall leader of the couple/family.
- When a plan is made or roles are set, they are dependable to execute their part of the plan or their role without micro-management.
- They do not enforce or introduce power struggles within the relationship. They are often largely responsible for the balance of harmony between the couple and family.
- They support and encourage their partner in an unshakable way; they are completely devoted to them.
- They provide comfort and peace and hold a safe space for their partner in times of need. They know the L-type partner often needs to be reassured or calmed with words and/or touch.

- They anticipate their partner's day-to-day needs and are cooperative and responsive to those needs.

Here are a few *quotes* from people who identify themselves as an L-type partner in regard to what they need/want expect from an S-type partner:

- "A person who is confident and self-aware."
- "A caring, considerate partner willing to listen and consider options with me that are a concern to the family or personal wellbeing. A partner that understands the thoughts and stressful concerns and isn't afraid to address them. A partner that isn't critical but supportive."
- "Honesty, Transparency, Authenticity, Service, and Devotion."
- "Communication, trust, attraction, ability and desire to be involved in the dynamic."
- "Consent, obedience, respect, understanding, and willingness to learn."
- "Understanding, passion, compassion, belief and acceptance of the subordinate role in the relationship, healthy self-esteem, trust and acceptance...love and service."
- "Love, acceptance, harmony, peace."
- "Someone who is my equal in all ways who has voluntarily yielded control...to me knowing I will make the decisions for both of us."
- "To be trusted enough to be given that control and love."
- "To be served and comforted; to have touch and be able to guide and lead. I want to help our lives improve, I want to be me and help them be their unique self."

- "...the same as any other committed relationship with the caveat being that the roles and expectations of each person involved are more tightly defined."

These quotes by partners in L/S relationships show that these relationships have both differences and similarities to other types of healthy relationships.

One of my favorite quotes described L/S beautifully: "...a relationship based on the natural attributes of each partner."

## The 2nd Biggest Problem

The next significant issue for the L/S person is also based on misunderstanding – this time it's their own. They find the *wrong* partner – in this case, this means they get into a relationship with someone who is *not* an L/S partner!

### It's Just Not a Match

Some professional matchmakers really seem to have a gift and a true feel for the single person's right fit; it's an intuitive and insightful skill. On the other hand, I wish some of them were more aware of L/S needs and dynamics.

The scenario is a disappointing one: time and time again, I have noticed that the L/S tendencies and preferences of and L/S client state themselves loudly and clearly through their behavior and words. Yet time and time again, the L/S component of the matching process is ignored or overlooked by the matchmaker.

A client of theirs clearly states what they want while using the language of an S-type or an L-type. They say things such as:

"I don't want someone that I can walk all over."

"I want to be the one who makes the decisions."

"I want someone who can take charge."

If a client is clearly an L/S-type partner, that just will not change. Even when they have been in other relationships that were non-L/S, they were aware at some point that they wanted and needed something different. They still do!

When attempting to make a match, it may do more harm than good to tell an L-type woman she needs to be more coy or quiet, or worse yet – that she has too much masculine energy. This can set her up for hurt and failure. Telling an S-type man that he needs to "man up" or be more

in control is a waste of time, can cause damage and create no matches.

If professional matchmakers learned to find out if clients were L/S partners, it would be a win-win situation.

As for online personals; the searches are incomplete for many. Popular matchmaking sites have scientists creating countless algorithms for individual preferences, tendencies, hobbies, similarities, etc. But why not factor in Leading and Supportive Relationship types more?

There are so many people whose relationships came to a painful end because they assumed their partner was compatible with them or they settled for what they had, thinking they could make it work. That's like expecting a round peg to fit into a square hole.

### **Case Illustration**

One unfortunate example of this is a client, Angie, who told me about a number of issues she was having. She felt a lack of self-confidence and had feelings of anxiety. She explained that she was underweight and still losing, and that she was withdrawn with people at work.

Angie was also obviously an S-type, and she was very unhappy in her marriage. Her husband, Dan, loved her and would be very affectionate toward her. Yet things just didn't feel right for Angie.

She felt that she had to keep track of the finances and household details, including cleaning, yet both partners had demanding jobs. She resented having to make all of the decisions and even having to try to get Dan to participate, even with outdoor tasks. Because of this, it bothered her that he spent a lot of time on his hobby, in the garage upgrading a classic car.

Angie felt that she needed him to take care of plans and details. For some time, she had felt like she was more of a

parental figure with Dan; that never felt right to her and she built up more resentment.

Obviously, this affected their love life. What she said she really needed was for him to show her how much he wanted her, maybe being more passionate at times. She was even clear with him that she needed him to take control when it came to intimacy. To her, it seemed that what Dan focused on was his own sexual release.

The marriage was on its last legs, and nothing was getting better. Both spouses were hurting, and it was taking quite a physical and mental toll on Angie. She considered having an affair, but decided to end the marriage before she started anything with someone else. Angie had felt like she was released from something that had been weighing her down and was not right for her.

The ensuing transformation I witnessed with Angie was amazing: she changed her look and felt more comfortable in her own skin. She began to organize events for co-workers. She made great friends. She got her weight under control, and looked and felt amazing. She seemed to become more youthful and full of joy and optimism.

Men began to notice and flirt with her when she went shopping or out to eat. She began to date an L-type man. The experience was thrilling for her and she felt alive and desired. She finally knew more of who she was and what she wanted in life. She was finally free to be herself, an S-type partner. I've heard countless stories like this from male and female S-types, young and old.



## **When You Know It's All Wrong**

Quite often, clients who identify themselves as S-type partners are very confused and disappointed with their relationships. This is *not* common with healthy and loving L/S relationships.

The following is an example of what happens over the evolution of a relationship like this.

### **Case Illustration**

The S-type, Jane, gives her trust to her partner, Paul, and proceeds naturally as an S-type. At first, Paul seems confident and in control. He is supportive and thoughtful.

Jane is initially patient when Paul is confused or indecisive, even making decisions for both of them selfishly in his favor. Eventually, Jane becomes frustrated and disappointed.

Paul gets defensive in regard to Jane's expectations, and he seems like a weak, unconcerned, selfish partner. She may try to explain and defend herself when he continues to deny any validity to her feelings or her truth. He may get increasingly domineering and manipulative.

To create further imbalance, Jane finds herself not being able to be the type of partner she naturally is while she is pushed into a role of being more of a Leading partner, having to make more decisions. She is pushed into an obligation to even motivate or support her partner as an L-type typically would.

Eventually Jane, an S-type partner who is not able to be who she is, becomes someone who is trying to live both roles of an L/S relationship in the absence of the required dynamics for the kind of relationship she needs and thought she had.

This does not change, rather it continues, causing progressive damage to the relationship.

The balance is off. This can be extremely unhealthy and this can become a conflicted and even abusive relationship. Not only is this a major turnoff for Jane, but it's demoralizing and confusing to her in regard to her relationship and her own identity – she's not happy!

It turns out that Jane was not, in fact, with an L-type partner. This is a type of partner I call a "fake L-type." The problem started with Paul either falsely representing himself as a Leading partner and/or the S-type partner created an idealized impression of Paul from the beginning.

Fake L-types can be selfish, self-centered and ultimately domineering. They don't seem to be able to have a healthy, loving relationship. They tend to have a sense of entitlement and make decisions based on what they want and how they feel about something instead of regarding their partner. They can get abusive and often blame the S-type for most of the problems between them. The unfortunate S-type caught in this type of relationship does not feel heard or loved, and they begin to feel forced into more of a parenting mode with their partner.

The L-type partner can go through the same grief and heartbreak in a similar situation.

### **Case Illustration**

Tracy is an L-type partner who is beginning a relationship with her partner, Victoria. Tracy is attentive and generous with Victoria. Victoria is effusively complimentary to her and happily agrees to attend all of the wonderful outings and events that Tracy takes her to. Soon it seems Tracy only receives affection or comfort when it's convenient for Victoria.

Tracy makes well-thought out decisions for the couple that she discusses together with a seemingly agreeable Victoria. But when it's time for Victoria to do her part of the project

or do the tasks she accepted, she repeatedly does not participate and has no explanation to offer.

When Tracy confronts her about this, Victoria responds defensively that Tracy is being unreasonable. A power struggle is created.

Eventually Tracy feels a lack of trust and that her partner is not regarding or treating her as a priority.

Some L-types find they are attracted to someone who may at first seem like a strong S-type partner. In the early stages of the relationship, the partner begins a tortuous pattern of reversing the "Control Shift" between the two repeatedly. They shift some control over and then take it back. So this is not a true S-type partner.

L/S partners can feel used and violated when they are taken advantage of and/or taken for granted after giving their trust over and serving in their natural ways – with a partner who is not their true complementary L/S-type.

In the survey, when asked if they had found that a past partner of theirs had not been the compatible L/S-type for them, most respondents answered yes. Many of them noted that they lost trust in their partner and the relationship.

Do any L/S people choose a partner who is not their L/S counterpart due to family, religious beliefs or tradition? Yes. Are there L/S people who choose a non-L/S partner due to incorrect assumption that they are L/S? Yes, some do. Some make it work; some of those relationships don't last long. But the common feeling shared when an L/S partner is with someone who is not their corresponding L/S counterpart is that something is missing; their needs and wants for that partner to be and act like an L/S counterpart are not met.

## **Avoid Creating an Ideal - Be an Observer**

If you are an L/S partner, here's how to keep a partner mismatch from happening to you:

When we find someone appealing to us, it's easy to want to think the best of them; and also very easy to fall in the trap of creating a false ideology of whom this person is and who they can be to us.

Imagine a cartoon thought bubble over an L/S person's head. In this analogy, a person can put their ideal L/S partner in this thought bubble, fitting all of the L/S attributes we want and deserve, since we also feel we are an ideal L/S partner. We can even make them loving and attentive in that bubble, putting us first and being of compatible service.

We'll make sure to pop that bubble when you meet or get to know someone. It's a great concept to imagine while you are putting your intentions into the universe or praying and/or hoping for them. But it's not realistic; it's not for practical application in relationships.

When an L/S partner figures out what kind of partner they are and what kind they need, they should take great care and thought to search for the compatible fit to their L/S-type. It's worth the time and effort that it takes. Again, if you feel you are an L/S partner, becoming familiar with the L/S profiles in this book can help you understand yourself and your (potential) partner better.

Don't assume that a dynamic that comes so natural to you is something that everyone can do! Ask questions, closely observe. Take note of how they interact with key people in their lives. As you watch, listen, and ask questions about them, they will paint the picture of who they are, instead of you making assumptions. Allow your love interest to earn your trust!

An amusing story tells of the strong preference of L/S-types: an S-type friend of mine had been talking to a man on the phone a few times as she was considering dating him. She never seemed very enthused after these calls but she agreed to go out with him that coming Saturday night.

A few days before they went out, she called me and told me she was completely turned-off by him. I asked her what happened and she said that he had sent her a friendly email that day that ended with: "May I please call you?" She promptly called off the date and explained to him that she didn't feel they were each other's type.

Well that's definitely one way to know.

## **Potential Issues L/S Relationships May Face**

While this is not a book about therapy for Leading and Supportive types or relationships, this section identifies a few of the common issues that the partners may deal with. Some of these are due to personal issues and some can be because of issues in the relationship.

## **Transference and Projection**

Sometimes the S-type transfers attitudes and feelings from their early significant relationships to their L-type partner. As southern California psychotherapist Richard Levine explains, "There is an automatic authority figure built into the relationship. This is a dynamic which makes the transference and projection occur more easily. If it is clearly seen and, if the person who is projecting works it through with a therapist, it can be an opportunity for healing old wounds leading to integration and transformation."

The L-type partner can help by being cognizant that the projection is not about them. Levine suggests that the L-type partner maintain "a quiet mind, an open heart, no agenda, and take nothing personally. When there is nowhere for the S-type's projection to land, it is far less likely to result in an escalating defensive and argumentative interchange."

### **Case Illustration**

Ron and Kathleen were a long-term L/S couple with no children. When Kathleen, the L-type, would try to discuss an issue she had with Ron, the S-type, he would get defensive and act like Kathleen was being unfair and hurtful.

Ron explained that when he was a child, his mother was abusive and often unreasonable. Eventually in life Ron became an angry victim. So as an adult in his relationship with Kathleen, he either thought he was being neglected and overlooked or he felt he was being targeted and attacked. In fact, Kathleen didn't feel these things toward him, nor did she treat him in those ways.

Both of them did counseling sessions with a professional familiar with L/S-types and learned that Ron's anger was not about Kathleen. She no longer took his accusations and behavior personally and over time, he learned to work through his previously unresolved feelings from his past.

He came to understand Kathleen as the person and L-type partner she really was, and his trust for her built very quickly. They were able to talk about their issues more calmly and productively.

### **Case Illustration**

Jessica, an entrepreneur, was the L-type in her 20-year marriage to Ben, an S-type. Inside, Jessica was very critical of herself. Ben couldn't understand why she seemed so unhappy when things were usually going so well for them.

Jessica would project her self-negativity towards Ben. Feeling badly about herself, Jessica would suddenly lash out, criticizing Ben about anything that would come to mind. Ben felt badly being treated so unreasonably and abruptly, especially as the outbursts happened more frequently. He also felt badly that his wife couldn't be happy.

During facilitation, the couple came to understand how Jessica's negative and self-critical feelings were projected on to Ben. She did her own personal work with coaching, focusing on her own self-esteem, confidence, and self-acceptance. They both benefited from facilitation, learning to understand each other better and communicate fairly and cooperatively so they could both be supportive to each other. They understand now that it's an ongoing process to make the unfamiliar healthy behaviors become familiar.



## **L-type Vulnerability**

As was explained earlier, L-types may be charismatic and brave, but they are sensitive and vulnerable too. They may hesitate (an understatement for some) to show their full vulnerability, as through life they have often become protective of their many inner layers.

One issue that the L-type partner should take responsibility for is when they behave in certain ways because they don't want to appear "incorrect" about decisions or "weak" to their partner. While this is a valid feeling, it can be a cop-out in a relationship where both partners require honesty and transparency.

Instead of living a double-standard to serve the ego, at the expense of the love between both people, it's important and so meaningful to the S-type partner for the L-type to "show their belly." That's a beautiful and sacred exchange when the L-type opens to the extensive love, gentle care, and overall acceptance of their partner. S-types: make yourself a safe harbor to your partner and you will see and experience so much more of them.

In a healthy Leading and Supportive Relationship, both partners are aware that the L-type has the best intentions for both. So if the L-type makes mistakes, they can acknowledge them and learn from them, rather than denying it and blaming the problem on their partner. The S-type will not continue to believe the blame is theirs anyway.

Failure to address this situation honestly can cause irreparable damage in the relationship. L-types should learn to take responsibility for their mistakes and they need to be able to show honest emotion to their partner. Why expect or demand full disclosure and openness from your partner if you won't do the same?

## **S-type Needing Care; Being Priority**

An L-type partner has no way of knowing the deep disappointment and pain that their S-type partner goes through when they feel like their needs and wishes aren't important to their Leading partner; the one they give up their trust and lives to as they follow them through life's journeys.

Consequently, S-types may be so trusting that they get convinced they may be wrong or unreasonable about situations with their partner. So the S-type doesn't honor their emotions that are telling them something needs to be addressed. They may not know how to comfortably and safely address their concerns in the first place.

This "quiet affliction" often leads to passive aggressive behavior. They may take their control back in silent ways. The "togglng" of their service and position in the relationship will continue and can cause problems of mistrust and lack of support for both partners. (It's important to note that the "togglng" can also happen when the S-type "tests" the L-type due to mistrust in past relationships; and the "togglng" can be done by either partner.)

Instead of *reacting* and *resenting* this behavior when it begins, the L-type needs to *respond* and *realize* they can use this opportunity to address the needs of their partner and be attentive to them. *They* should open up *a safe and loving space to listen and ask plenty of questions*, hopefully leading to a resolution.

Sometimes, the L-type partner becomes negligent, selfish, demanding, and critical, and mostly considers their comfort when it comes to decision-making. There are three main reasons for this:

- The L-type partner doesn't feel understood by their partner.
- They lack confidence or self-esteem.
- The L-type has their own personal issues that keep them from following through with their leadership responsibility in the L/S relationship.

### **Case Illustration**

Jack and Zoe had been married for 12 years. This was the second marriage for each.

Zoe was a client who had been suffering stress and lack of focus. She was losing some of her hair and her stomach became upset easily. She didn't really have a feel for direction in her life.

Zoe began to talk about her husband Jack as if he didn't care about her very much. Yet I noticed that the more she described him, the more he sounded like a classic L-type partner, and she seemed like a solid S-type, especially after I asked her some qualifying questions that help clients determine if they are an L/S-type or not.

I had never met nor had any contact with Jack; however I offered a few suggestions about what Jack may be feeling about himself or his situation that leads him to act irritated or impatient. She was surprised and confirmed that he had said the exact things I said and done some of the things that I had mentioned as well.

I shared my impression that he did care about her, he did need and want her, and that she was very important to him. I used examples that she had shared with me about their relationship.

Over a short time, she began to finally realize how much he cared for and needed her. But his lack of self-esteem, self-criticism, and fear of change were manifesting in his anger bursts and criticism of her and others around them.

Zoe was very loyal to Jack and definitely wanted to please him and make him happy. Despite this, he questioned her when she didn't come home at the time he expected her. He was threatened that she was having sessions to help herself, even though he had told her she needed to do something to help her find focus and what she was passionate about. He complained about many things she did or didn't do.

He was very intelligent and often talked about being smarter than her and everyone else. She couldn't get her opinion fully across to him and when she started, he would criticize and confront her. He had tirades that were not healthy for their grandchildren to be around. He seemed unhappy with everyone, even the puppy who was still being trained.

She confirmed that he had been disappointed many times in life and was very sensitive to that. He was very sensitive to losing her, but projected an attitude of bravado when she tried to tell him that she may have to leave him.

There were times he would be affectionate to her – without words, without apology or acknowledgement and that kept her hanging on – for a while.

Jack refused to see a third party together with her or alone to help with his personal issues. He seemed threatened by it and insisted to her that "those things don't work." That defensive mentality is nothing new, especially if he had ever worked with a non-L/S aware professional. But it's really not helpful for the couple.

Zoe admitted to me that I seemed to know Jack better than anyone in his life, except for her – yet I had never met him. I could have helped both of them understand the other one much better.

She ended up leaving him and moving out of the area. This is unfortunate because if he would have worked to get a

healthy self-confidence, beginning by openly talking about it, these two people who loved each other very much wouldn't have had so much damage done that may be irreparable. Again, I can't tell you that it had a happy ending; but maybe it's not over yet. Good luck to them.

No, I am not happy to give you stories that don't have a happy ending (yet). But it's important to stress some of the main things in L/S relationships that can be fatal to a great love between two people.

***S-type partners:*** whether you are disappointed in yourself or your partner – or don't want to disappoint your partner; don't ever think that keeping issues from your partner in L/S relationships is good in any way! This is a key reason for L/S relationship breakdowns.

***L/S partners:*** Stick to what you promised and committed to and if you can't, talk with your partner about it right away. Tell them that you need to feel safe to be able to open up to them, ask for their understanding; they love you.

## **Stress and Alienation of the L-type**

After years of working with couples and families, having my own personal relationship experiences, and reading studies about the leader of animal packs had higher stress and cortisol levels, I realized that whoever was the head of the household tends to have stress that others may not understand.

They have a responsibility that envelopes the well-being, care, and involvement of their S-type partner and perhaps their immediate family as well. The L-types are often vigilant and protective of their partner. At the same time, they can be unappreciated, taken for granted, disregarded, misunderstood, misjudged, and even demonized by others. Sometimes S-types reject their service – often in a passive-aggressive way. There are no words to explain the pain and mistrust the L-type experiences when this happens; after giving their time, heart and energy in service to the one they love most.

## **L-type Trust Issues; S-type Toggling**

The Leading partner tends to invest much of themselves and what they have into the relationship. When they trust someone with so much of themselves, it's a pretty big deal. Because they have a generous and loving spirit, they may have a history of having been taken advantage of or taken for granted by friends, family, and partners.

If their partner compromises the L-type's trust in them, it's hard to get back to the place they were at. If the S-type continues to breach trust, it severely limits the potential growth, strength and closeness of the relationship and can sabotage and destroy it completely.

A key to this is to realize that violating trust doesn't come from just infidelity; it can happen with issues that the L-type makes decisions about and that both partners have subsequently agreed on.

For instance, if the S-type decides to go against an agreement with the L-type (and against their word) and handle the situation the way they prefer instead, they are actually:

- rejecting the authority of their L-type (Leading) partner;
- rejecting the decision made by their L-type (along with the effort and time spent to make that decision);
- rejecting the service of their L-type;
- taking away the control they gave over to their L-type, when they had committed it to them; and
- making decisions that will affect both partners – against the L-type's will and knowledge.

The L-type partner may have a multi-faceted reaction to this. They feel that their service and care has been disregarded. They feel that their partner's word to them was broken; they feel trust that they gave was breached; and

they feel foolish or question themselves for being so trusting.

The pain that happens to an L-type when the S-type continues to disregard what they have agreed to is brutal. As mentioned earlier, L-types are sensitive people and take their service seriously. When they give, they give their effort, time, and thought, and they give it from their heart. That is always, *a/ways* a gift. Remember that many of them have trust issues coming into the relationship and they take more time to be vulnerable with their partner.

There can be times when the S-type begins to disregard requests from their partner or fails to uphold their part of agreements that have been made between the two of them. This causes a damaging "push-pull" or "togglng" effect, with the S-type taking back the "Control Shift" between the two without notice. Don't be confused – this is a clear power struggle.

This breach of trust can easily turn into increased dishonesty and keeping important details from their Leading partner who is the one responsible for the decision-making process for the couple. Usually, this is done silently with no direct communication and creates sabotage of the cooperative and productive efforts of the couple. This is not the type of relationship suitable for either L/S partner. Along with trust and understanding, the key Leading/Supportive element gets compromised and begins to erode.

The S-type may not realize that they are taking away the L-type's authority when they override it with their own actions or inactions. This is rejecting the L-type's position in the relationship and their service. Breaching trust in any form is a sure way to push a Leading partner away. This becomes a continuous loop of hurt and damage that can become devastating for both partners.



This is something the S-type should take responsibility for, but hopefully both partners are committed to working through this.

S-types: don't be so afraid to come to your partner when something starts to go wrong; it will be much worse for both of you when your partner finds out that things have been going wrong for a while and they've been in the dark! Then there's a much bigger mess that falls in both of your laps.

This usually happens because what is important to the couple or what is important to the L-type partner becomes a lower priority for the S-type partner. Here are some of the most common reasons for this change in behavior:

- The S-type partner has been feeling that their needs and wants are low priority for the L-type partner. They may even feel neglected or don't feel valued as much as they need to.
- The S-type may be unconsciously testing their L-type partner to see if they can depend on them to not only set but maintain boundaries as well.
- The S-type has their own personal issues that keep them from fully giving in to the L/S relationship.

Something as basic and important as communication can be the best way to begin rebuilding from this point. Before problems have a chance to start, the S-type should be open with the L-type about what they need in regard to their issue. They should be able to trust their L-type that they will be heard and will be treated with care and attention.

### **Case Illustration**

Tom fell in love with Dawn in their late 30's and they had a very passionate relationship from the start. They realized early on that Tom was an L-type and Dawn was an S-type. At the same time, Dawn was still hurt from infidelity in her previous marriage by someone who presented as an L-type

but actually was not. She fell in love with Tom and appreciated his L-type service and energy. He helped her get her confidence back and helped her feel more loved than she ever had imagined.

Despite this, Tom found out that Dawn placed an ad online and started talking to and corresponding with other men; and that she went on a weekend trip to get closure with her ex-husband without talking to Tom about it.

Being the L-type partner, Tom felt traumatized. He had taken her on a romantic vacation, during the time these things were happening, at which they both pledged their devotion to each other. He had been loving, honest, and a responsible L-type. Dawn felt badly, and promised to make some changes and work to get his trust back.

They talked through the issues and found out more about Dawn's fears for commitment in the relationship. They decided to rebuild and commit to each other, using terms and guidelines in place so Dawn could earn Tom's trust again. Things went well and Dawn never contacted other men or her ex-husband again.

Several years later, during a time when they were having some financial troubles, Tom found that Dawn was quietly and compulsively buying trinkets and figurines on an online auction site. She was purchasing every two or three days.

Dawn had kept this from Tom, and they had a talk about it to see what she needed so she could keep collecting and it wouldn't compromise them anymore financially. She showed him that each one was inexpensive. They decided that she wouldn't spend more than \$20 per pay check on them.

They had also agreed that for the time being, she would talk with him before she ever purchased anything over \$100, no matter what it was. From the beginning, Tom definitively asked one thing of Dawn: not to keep anything from him. She agreed.

A year later, they were beginning to recover from their serious financial setbacks. Suddenly, Tom found that Dawn had been purchasing more expensive items for much more money than they had agreed.

The situation had become full-blown. He learned that this had progressed to her buying collectibles for \$150 or more. She was increasing her purchases; in a couple of months, she had spent hundreds of dollars on collectibles and was starting to bid much more. Dawn had been hiding them, sneaking them into the house, having them delivered at work, and had been lying to him nearly the whole time. She had been selling some of them in a desperate attempt to make some money, but she just increased her purchasing. By borrowing and extending her credit, this led to more financial trouble.

Dawn had broken both rules they had agreed on for purchases. She had broken his main rule: to not keep things from him. Tom had believed her and depended on her to keep her word and honor the agreement that she made with him. It was her promise to keep. He felt played, disregarded, and betrayed. The old scars from the past between them had been opened up, and Tom was at a loss for how to deal with it.

He felt that their personal ethics were too incompatible, and he didn't know how to trust Dawn.

They had a few talks, and Dawn realized that her collecting had turned into addictive behavior. He asked her why she didn't come to him and talk with him about it. She had no answer. Tom was hurt but wanted to know what was going on for Dawn.

She began to talk more openly about the reasons she felt compelled to do this behind his back. Dawn realized that her stress from the financial issues seemed to be driving some of the behavior. Additionally she had been mistreated and

stressed out at work for some time. Also, she had never felt safe or comfortable sharing her child-like enjoyment of these toys and collectibles and had been embarrassed about it.

They talked about how they each felt about the situation, and how they could change it for the better. Dawn realized that she had been selfish and hadn't thought about how her actions affected her partner.

Update: If Dawn would have come to him early on and been honest, the damage between them wouldn't have been so extensive. But she had never learned to do that. Dawn is now learning how to feel and deal rather than avoid and escape. I can't tell you there was a happy ending yet; they are still working on it with an L/S-aware professional.

Some of the couples' situations mentioned here may happen with the L/S partners' being interchangeable. Both partner types can hold back or take unhealthy actions in the relationship due to their own personal issues, including their experiences with early relationships. There are more issues that can come up just as there are numerous issues that are presented with all types of couples.

S-types should be patient with an L-type who airs their issues in these situations. They may be angry or upset but consider that they are not trying to strike out at you verbally. L-types feel deep hurt from giving all of their caring, effort, and energy, just to have it be continuously ignored and rejected when the Control Shift is taken out of the relationship again.

Because of the productive, cooperative nature of the Leading and Supportive Relationship, the balance can be thrown off significantly if each partner doesn't follow through on what they mutually agreed on.

# Optimize Your L/S Relationship and be Preventative

Every healthy loving relationship builds on the same components such as trust, communication, patience, understanding and mutual work/effort. So some statements or information shared here may pertain to both L/S and non-L/S relationships.

One of the most useful and successful things I learned about long-term, committed intimate relationships is not to do them like most people do. I use that wording because the problem is that people who are "in relationships" tend to just let them happen. Active partners are engaged – doing the things to keep it from being an unfortunate statistic. With healthy, long-term relationships, partners are living, working, participating – "doing" what it takes.

Statistics show that most relationships just don't last. Many of them are dysfunctional and unhappy. But as for the rest: secrets to successful relationships lie with those who actually have them.

The people who don't want to become an unfortunate statistic have greater relationship aspirations. They want a connection unlike none they've ever known. They want ultimate trust and support between each other which comes with thorough understanding and acceptance of each other. Many have a *shared purpose* of goals and life fulfillment that they want to attain together. They want someone to depend on when times get tough. They plan and intend (not just hope) to make it last for life.

They create their own structure that they both maintain for certain relationship success. L/S relationships begin with the stage set for this by the nature of the Leading and Supportive partners themselves.

Of course there are plenty of resources for help with just about any relationship. I work with clients at various levels and phases of their relationships, including long-term couples in crisis.

In my experience, facilitation and coaching have helped save many relationships and marriages. Yet my warning remains the same: do not let the relationship get to the point of crisis – an initial phase of the end of the relationship – *before* you get help. You've just lowered your chances of saving the relationship or making sure it's fulfilling for both of you. In addition, you bring fewer resources to work within your pissed-off, end-of-your-rope, non-empathetic crisis mode.

I encourage people to be the best person they can be – the person they were meant to be. And along with that goes the belief that constantly improving your relationship is important as well. Loving, stable relationships don't just happen!

If you treat it like something that is just there, it's not being nourished and cared for, so by default it is at risk of becoming ill. I still don't understand why people do this. The relationship has to be fed, and learning how to improve and care for it should be something the couple is dedicated to. If that doesn't happen, why complain about the results you end up with?

## **Communication Prevents a Ship from Sinking**

Here's a huge component of relationship optimization. Please do not skip this section if you suspect that it's a boring, generic mantra about "communication."

Most of us didn't get formal relationship education in school; I'm not sure why that wasn't offered since love, relationships, and family are what we have been involved in since our awareness and these are some of the things that are most important to people!

However, there are the many, many books, professionals, and programs that teach us the basics that many of us have heard or learned. It's easy to find out about relationships needing "work" or as some prefer: "effort." Much of that is about communication and understanding each other. You've probably heard about "checking in" with your partner to gauge where you both are at in a certain situation or point in time. Change is always happening in relationships and communication plays a big part in awareness of and adjustment to that change.

This is good advice, and I consider those actions as some of "the basics." If you start with those, things become better, clearer, more efficient, and more harmonious than they probably would have been. But why would you settle for just the basics unless you want a "basic relationship"?

Here are some helpful examples that may be part of or even beyond the basics. My advice is to adopt them now. The mind loves familiarity so if you make these things a habit, they become familiar, and then you both can default to these actions naturally.

Have a standing mutual agreement that whatever a partner is trying to convey, the other partner will repeat it and acknowledge, agree or disagree. Here's a simple example:

The L-type, being the leader, says: "I would like you to please pick up the dry-cleaning and mail these items on your way home from work today."

Instead of saying "ok" and possibly putting the request in a short-term memory bank and going on with their day, the S-type does this:

S-type: "You would like the dry-cleaning picked up and these things to be dropped in the mail on my way home today, right?"

L-type: "Yes."

S-type: "I can mail the items on the way home but I have a meeting at the school right after work and the cleaners will be closed."

Then both can talk it out and agree on an alternative for the cleaners, which can be repeated by both.

This can be done in regards to upcoming family events, arranging time to talk about serious issues, day-to-day operations, etc. and actually takes less time than misunderstandings take to happen, cause damage, and snowball into destructive patterns.

Do this action together over and over and over until it comes naturally. These conversations may seem foreign or uncomfortable at first, but after repeating this healthy pattern, shorthand can develop, which can work excellently, instead of starting with shorthand and missing the opportunities to understand each other!

Here's another example that is more emotional:

S-type: "I don't feel like going to your friends' pool party this weekend."

L-type: "You don't want to go this weekend? Why is that?"

S-type: "I feel like you ignore me around your friends."



L-type: "You feel like I ignore you when I'm around my friends? I had no idea."

This leads to more productive conversation and agreement. The L-type could have assumed that the S-type got bored and just didn't have the patience to go, and reacted to that instead, which would have been way off base and very unfortunate.

Respectfully telling your partner that you want to share what you've been feeling or what has been on your mind lately is a good opener. Make sure you both take that space and time to talk about it, ask them not to make you blurt it out suddenly when you are both in the middle of something else just because they want to ease their mind.

You both have a responsibility to present issues that you have with your partner in an appropriate, safe setting, in a *supportive, cooperative* way. So to help, offer assistance in *cooperative language*: "What can I do to help you with this?" or "What do you need from me right now?"

People who do this are not weak; they are the strong ones who are willing to step up and work on the relationship. They don't take it for granted; they see the amazing value it has in their lives.

Talk it out, even if it feels frustrating and draining. Take a break and re-group if you feel overwhelmed or stuck. Create a pattern of this, so it becomes your normal method of operation as a couple.

## **They Can't Read Your Mind - So Tell Them!**

L/S partners are closely connected to each other, and some of them are intuitive, but they should remember that they can't read each other's mind! I've actually heard people literally expect that from their partner. Sometimes it may seem like they can - that's called intuition or the mastery of "anticipating their partner."

It's hard to find happy, loving, long-term relationships that don't have open and effective communication as a rule. Even in loving relationships that don't have safe and open communication, many clients tell me they are unhappy with some areas of their relationship or with their partner and feel helpless about it. *People suffer because they don't speak up and tell their loved one what they need.*

For Leading and Supportive partners, L/S relationships can make dreams come true in life and love like other relationships never could. *We manifest the relationships we want in large part through communicating.* The initial meeting may seem by chance but the relationship doesn't become what we want it to be by chance.

Ultimately, it's important to realize that someone has a right to love and to have the relationship they want and need, just as much as everyone else does. Everyone has a right to live as who they are and to be who they want to be.

If you can't share that with a partner you chose to go through life with, then are you living a full life or are you treating life like a dress rehearsal? Remember the quote about the greatest and most common regret of the dying: *"I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me."*

Further, it's not fair to keep your concerns, hurt, and resentments from your partner. They can't read your mind

and don't always know what you are needing and wanting from them.

S-types: don't think it's demanding. L-types: don't think it's weak. Both of you need to talk to your partner about what you want, need, and expect. Over-share instead of allowing a lack of sharing.

I'm reminded of an S-type partner who told me that her husband said something insensitive to her that hurt her feelings. She said that the next day, they were sitting together reading quietly on the couch, and she (silently) gave him every opportunity to apologize for what he said. I wondered how he would know that is what she needed from him. He can't get it through osmosis!

Dr. Brad Sagarin notes that this type of relationship "might make it more difficult for the S-type to extract themselves to assert what he or she needs." He recommends that L/S couples have "mechanisms to step back and take time to talk."

## **Negotiate Negotiate Negotiate**

This leads us to one of the most reliable ways to go the successful route and build and maintain this relationship - negotiation.

Negotiation should start early and be a constant. Dr. Sagarin recommends that you "open a dialogue when you are dating; beginning at the early stages to gauge compatibility, understanding, and agreement."

If you are dating someone regularly, why not identify yourself as an L/S partner type in the early stages? The L/S profiles can be very useful when helping to identify Leading and Supportive compatibility in potential partners, and may help people understand more about themselves as individuals. Some of my clients who use the L/S profiles know what to look for and what to avoid because they know what does and does not work for them.

People bring different expectations into a relationship. So it's important to negotiate an equal and fair relationship that works for both partners. This begins with sharing your wants and needs with your partner, making sure it's consistent with who each of you are. Give your relationship the best chance of success by not settling. Be yourself! Don't compromise on the must-haves; as the resentments from this just build up and cause damage to be dealt with later.

When sharing your needs and wants, ask for acknowledgement and find out what your (potential) partner's thoughts and feelings are in regard to what you have shared. This can help lead to mutual agreement of their future intentions and commitment. Then, do the same with them, starting with listening to their wants and needs.

And so the negotiations begin. Because we are always changing, our relationships change as well. Re-negotiating

on *both* partners' terms are in order whenever one or both of you feels that it's due; it's not difficult to figure out and the rewards vs. risk equation is in your favor. You can even get creative and bring up things that you wished for so long ago and thought would never happen for you!

Negotiate the style of communication as well as the terms. S-types often say they want the directions or requests to be clear and to the point. Too many of them have experienced vague or incomplete communication from their partner while addressing the details of a situation or event. This causes disappointment and problems.

Rosie, a client of mine, echoes what I've heard from many S-types: "I don't want my partner to be hesitant. I want my partner to sound firm and definite so there is no confusion! I've had bad experiences. [Past partners] would ask me to do a task and I would do it. Later they had expected me to do something differently or more than they had explained, which resulted in us being upset with each other. I don't mind being told what to do; it makes things clear for me. I like it when my partner is confident about their decisions."

Some people prefer to hear a direct request or response; some prefer their partner to be more polite or gentle in those situations. Eventually just about everyone wants to hear gratitude and appreciation.

No one should be expected to act like someone they are not, but work within each other's types and styles of communication and you both will be heard much better!

## **Secret Weapon: Mutual Understanding**

We've talked about communication being so vital in the Leading and Supportive Relationship; that cannot be emphasized enough. If you are in an L/S relationship, especially one that has had some serious issues lately, and you want to resolve this together, you must communicate and you must listen.

More importantly, you must *hear*. Hear their experience – without making it about you. If your partner isn't getting heard, understood or getting their needs met, *then ignoring it or trying to deflect it will lead to a lose-lose situation.*

This section is about the magic wand that can rescue a relationship or keep both partners on the same page so that issues don't create a critical condition!

Some people seem to think it takes too much effort and energy just to listen and find out where the other person is coming from. Often partners just do not do this. Instead, they are very focused on themselves – where they are coming from, and they are so very clear on this.

So the missing component to arriving at a solution should seem easy (unless you are single): What is the other person experiencing?

It may not be surprising to learn that one of the biggest issues that respondents mentioned in the L/S Relationship survey was that both partners needed to understand where the other person is coming from much better than they do. Sounds like just about any type of relationship doesn't it?

You'd be surprised at what you would learn about what your partner loves and dislikes when you ask and listen. They may feel a need to be comforted with touch as it may calm them down and make them feel cared for. Others are extremely uncomfortable with too much touch. Neither way is wrong, it's just their way.

Often, people need more than agreement. Maybe they are having the need to be heard and understood. Sometimes they just want acknowledgement of how difficult or upsetting a situation has been for them. They may not want their partner to give them solutions up front; that could minimize their experience or feelings.

You may find that your loved one dreads the holidays because of past conditioning. They may celebrate holidays to extremes because it makes them feel alive to celebrate. Either way is acceptable. They will appreciate your support (and compromise) in either situation.

Naturally, knowing more about them promotes understanding. It helps the connection stay strong and helps you to serve them in the most productive and effective ways.

### **Case Illustration**

A client, Kayla, was on the verge of divorce in her 30-year marriage. She and her husband, Bruce, have a family business and live in a home on a beautiful, peaceful stretch of property. Over the years, Kayla was concerned and upset that Bruce was getting angrier and more resentful with her. When he would lash out, she would shut down.

Bruce was the head of the company, responsible for people who worked for them. He made sure they were provided for generously in exchange for their loyal and consistent work, especially during peak season. Kayla worked to support Bruce's day-to-day needs, taking care of the meals and household. She had raised their daughter.

After their daughter went off to college, Kayla became restless and felt that she needed to find some purpose and something in her life that she was passionate about. Bruce was supportive about this and was fine with her taking vacations on her own in their house in Hawaii, spending

time with friends, and taking classes or doing what she needed to do to be happy.

Kayla came to me with little hope because it seemed their marriage had gotten to the point where they were both so defensive with each other that they were no longer open to what the other person was going through and why.

They didn't feel the empathy (vs. compassion) that was needed for a mutual understanding, compromise, and cooperation. Further, Bruce had never agreed to any therapy or counseling in his life; he was sure he would be judged versus being understood.

Because of the critical situation they were in, Bruce and Kayla agreed to relationship facilitation. As my usual procedure, I had separate sessions with each partner. When I first talked with Kayla, she related to many S-type profile points and identified herself as an S-type.

When I worked with Bruce, I immediately recognized him as the L-type partner, so I discussed Leading and Supportive Relationships with him and gave him some examples from the L/S profiles. He identified himself as an L-type. Because I understood his partner type, I worked from that point to understand where he was coming from. He was able to open up and the three of us worked together for a few months.

Both partners agreed early on that they were in an L/S relationship. Kayla was eventually able to face her fears and trust that Bruce could change his angry behaviors and reactions to her. She did this because she started to understand herself more, especially as the S-type partner, and she learned to understand him as her L-type partner.

She began to learn things about her husband that she hadn't known before. She learned that he felt tremendous responsibility on him for both of them, their family, their employees, and their employees' families. She learned that



some of the socializing she had done with the employees had undermined boundaries he had established with them.

This made his work more difficult and caused some messes that he had to clean up, when instead, he had counted on her support.

She learned that he needed to have her loyalty in regard to some of the friends that she was hanging around that had taken advantage of him. He needed acknowledgement from her in regard to her family members who he had helped yet who had taken advantage of him.

She also learned that he was very sensitive and it was important to him that his family was happy and healthy and that he did right by others. He had been hurt by her, because she didn't understand how some of her actions affected him.

An important realization she made was that if she were to *acknowledge* him in the moment, instead of being protective and defensive, that he would calm down.

Bruce learned that Kayla felt that she had taken care of him in important ways and that she didn't always see things the way he did. She was the same free spirit he fell in love with and she didn't need as many boundaries with people like he did.

Bruce, understanding himself better and having been validated and understood more by his wife, stopped his angry outbursts and let go of grudges. Embracing their L/S dynamic, they began to be able to anticipate each other before events and situations came up, so they could prepare ahead of time in a preventative way. They were two people who honored their individuality but could work together as a team better than ever.

So their relationship became more understanding and less divisive. The romance ed and they began to enjoy each

other more. They made it through the toughest test they had been through.

## **Empathy: Get It and Work Towards Mastery**

If you develop and hone your skills to have empathy about your own feelings *and* your partner's feelings, the benefits are extraordinary. Communicating this to your partner creates an advantage for you both to be heard and understood and helps you both toward a solution or compromise in a cooperative effort.

When you take an objective look at what you are experiencing and why you feel the way you do about it, you may be surprised that sometimes it is more related to your feelings or view of past experiences and your own filters than you may expect. This may be the truth for your partner as well.

We need to ask ourselves the questions that go beyond our internal experience. For example: what was upsetting him to cause him to act out? What place was she coming from when she said that statement? Why did they decide to include my friend and not me? What caused him to feel that I let him down?

Sometimes we need to "hover" over the situation as an observer, to get a clearer view of the situation. Often we need to communicate for clarity of the situation or experience. With partnerships, you learn more about the people you care about; another bonus is that you don't feel so personally hurt.

Consider that people don't usually do things to hurt you. They often do things for their own comfort.

Also it doesn't work when a partner tells the other: "If it were me, I would have done this" or "that is not doing what normal people/partners/families do." This has implications that something is wrong with your partner which can be very damaging, and this puts the situation into lose-lose territory for both.

Both partners must be honored for who they are and what their needs are. An example: a sensitive L-type partner has a lot of responsibilities to juggle all week and needs to have down time at the end of the week because they are overwhelmed. The S-type who has a steady stream of energy wants to go out dancing on Friday night as they will have to work on Saturday night.

How do you determine the answer? You start with both partners honoring the others' natural energy rhythms as a part of who they each are. Acknowledge the individual needs for overstimulation recovery and for social stimulation. Once you know that the partners are not trying to judge or ignore the other partner's natural energy rhythms or personal needs, both are in more resourceful states to work out a compromise or make changes.

Empathy and *acknowledgment* lead to tremendous understanding between the two. These are the magic tools that take couples to another level, developing Mastery of Compromise, resulting in ultimate compatibility. This gives the couple a huge advantage over the existing relationship survival statistics.

L/S partners who take time out to check in with each other about current issues, and really come to some understanding about the other person's take on them, find that it helps to keep their relationship strong. Further, L/S partners who, instead of *reacting*, learn to *respond* in the moment to gauge where both partners are coming from. They can have a greater chance of success when working through issues and fostering successful longevity of the relationship. These are bonding experiences that build trust with each other.

## How to Love Each Other

I have a client who absolutely does not like to be given flowers by her fiancé. She is allergic to some of them and absolutely abhors having to trim and clean the stems, arrange them in a vase with fresh water, and doing whatever else that will help them last longer. She wants nothing to do with this process and has politely told him that it's just not for her.

He continued to get them for her when they were having communication problems (i.e. he wasn't able to validate/understand/address her needs), so dear reader, with your outside view of this, the irony is probably not lost on you.

Sometimes people offer gestures, gifts, and sentiments to their partner in ways that they would like to receive love or ways *they* feel should work. But why settle for that tactic when everyone is different? If questioned clearly and openly, your partner will tell you exactly what makes them feel loved most! Follow that helpful information and score!

Love someone in the ways that *they* feel loved the most. Then you have successfully given your partner love in the ways that he/she most accept/feels and appreciates it. Now repeat over and over so it becomes second nature.

When working with couples, I often use the basics of the book, "Five Love Languages", and it helps tremendously.

Consider as well that it's unreasonable to expect them to know everything that triggers or upsets you; they may not be triggered or upset by the same things. Don't expect them to have strengths in the areas that you are strong or insightful. Yes, of course it's good that similar core ethics in life exist for both of you, but don't expect that they should have done something just because it's what you would have done.

If you both are loving each other in the ways each responds to best, if you are acknowledging each other's thoughts and feelings, if you are validating both partner's values, beliefs, and intentions while consistently being in service, the bond and love between you can grow more than you can imagine!

## **In Service**

Both the S-type and the L-type are in service to each other. This seems to be a recurring theme when I interview or work with happy L/S partners. They bring quality service to the relationship table in various ways that complement their partner's offerings. This is clear logic – both of you being a team player and doing it consistently equals a win-win situation. This can keep the relationship strong and help to maintain the integrity of the bond between you. Your partner has needs and wants that you can help with; where they may stumble or hesitate, you can hold them up or carry them.

Everyone is unique. I suggest that you key in on your partner's needs from the beginning and see how you fit. Do they need guidance and words of encouragement without judgment? Do they need calming, therapeutic touch to relax and get centered? Do they need time alone to recharge and need you to support this? Do they need more time with you without focusing on the "business" side of things in the family?

Then become clear about service with discussion. Establishing any protocols for service may be very helpful for both partners. Also, check in from time to time to make sure the service is what is needed or can be changed to be more productive and supportive. Establish a policy to express appreciation for the service your partner provides to you. Any loving and devoted human can benefit from their loved one's acknowledgement and gratitude. Whether the relationship is fed or starves is up to you.

## **Support Network**

A healthy support network makes such a difference for a healthy L/S partner. Always hold close those loved ones who are good influences for you and are supportive. Take some time to weed out the relationships that have run their course and are no longer positive or productive for you as you build and maintain your support network. In this case, quality always trumps quantity.

I suggest you get together regularly with friends who are in L/S relationships. Enjoy camaraderie and similar interests. Talk about L/S theory, styles, and anything else that will feed you and your L/S relationship. Whatever you do, DO NOT complain and *do not compare* yourself to anyone else!

No one, absolutely no one, has exactly the relationship that you have. Relationships are idiosyncratic; every relationship is unique. You may be surprised to learn some things about other couples. I've had clients who admire other couples because they seem to have the ideal lifestyle. Often, it turns out that they are going through a crisis or experiencing problems that no one could have guessed. Comparing is a trap. We never know someone else's full circumstances.



## **Consequences and Rewards**

How to change hurtful, unhealthy behavior without yelling and fighting:

Some may expect this section to be about how the L-type partner sets boundaries and structure using consequences and rewards with their partner. That's fine, but it can be helpful for *both* partners to be able to use this system.

In fact, when I started writing this book, I joked about naming it: The Feeding, Care and Training of your Leading Partner.

This book is about healthy and happy long-term Leading and Supportive Relationships. That being said, during the course of a relationship, some partners mistreat each other, disregard or disrespect each other, or hurt each other's feelings. As scandalous as it may sound, using consequences and rewards systems have helped get L/S couples back on course and stay there.

Communication is first. Each needs to tell their partner what their needs or issues are in a respectful, clear way. They need to ask for understanding and agreement, at least an explanation or compromise that both can agree to. Then, they wait for the changes to take action in the amount of time agreed.

If this doesn't work, the consequences are already defined, as are the rewards when this does work. Basically, it's setting and maintaining (the hard part) boundaries about what is not acceptable.

If a partner is continuing to cause hurt and/or discomfort to their partner, even though the issue has been made clear to them, then it may help if the offending partner feels discomfort on their part due to their behavior. This can help them to become re-conditioned and develop acceptable behavior that becomes habit.

I feel that it's unfair to give a consequence without a warning. People often have "unspoken" agreements with each other for some time that certain behavior or treatment is acceptable and allowed.

So the partner who wants the damaging behavior to change is essentially changing an "agreement" that the two have had, sometimes since the beginning of the relationship. It is recommended to do this fairly, firmly, and patiently. Keep in mind that the behavior may not change overnight; though sometimes it does.

It's important to let their partner know that from now on, when they continue their behavior, the instant response will be the defined consequence.

For an S-type, after getting no results with open communication, the issue doesn't just go away. Some of them may be at a disadvantage when it comes to defending themselves or standing up for themselves in their L/S relationship, because they generally abhor confrontation and arguing with someone they are close with.

### **Case Illustration**

My client Margie, a retiree, was tired of her husband, Glenn, snapping at her when he was moody, and for often putting her down when she would state her opinions. She had also endured too many times while sitting in front of the television when he would provide amusement for himself by rudely teasing her or groping her to make her uncomfortable – and then laughing about it.

Initially, it's often very difficult for S-types to set and maintain boundaries with their loved ones, as had been true with my client. Facilitation or counseling with the two of them wasn't an option, and Margie was determined to stay in the marriage. She had been unable to reason with Glenn. She really felt hopeless and believed that she had no option but to endure Glenn's mistreatment of her for the rest of her

life. So she came to me to help her make that change. What to do with this?

I did agree to help her with change, but not to tolerate treatment that devalued her and made her suffer. I'm just not in the business for that. So, after she had identified their relationship as L/S with her being the S-type, we made a plan.

We know that generally, L-types are very dependent on their S-type partners. They especially don't like to be without their S-type during the times they expect and want companionship most. They may not admit it, but it's generally true. During our discussion, I realized that Glenn depended on Margie's company, even though she had no idea about this.

I explained to Margie that Glenn would probably experience significant discomfort if she was away from him when they normally watch television together as well as at meal times. She didn't buy it for a minute; she was sure that he would not care if she was in the room with him or not.

But she agreed to try the plan. Being fair, warning him about what she would do whenever he would make sport of her, the time came for action. He started his typical behavior. Margie quietly got up, left the room, and went into another room where she would listen to music, read, or watch TV on her own, behind a closed door.

While she was getting a break and relaxing, sans grief from her husband, Glenn's experience was much different – he came into her room and implored her to come back! The first couple of times he convinced her. At those times, he didn't continue the offensive behavior toward her. However, she had been clear with me that she didn't want it to happen at all. I suggested that she stay in the other room to give him enough time to really feel the "absence of Margie," in order to bring a stop to the mistreatment altogether.

Margie agreed to do this, but added that it was inconvenient for her to have to get up and leave the room.

Understandable, but we wanted this to be worth her effort, and for her to feel safe and comfortable in her home. The next time I worked with her, I asked her if his behavior was changing, and she said it had decreased significantly. Once she began to stay in the other room during longer periods, she reported that his rude and upsetting behavior toward her had stopped!

She felt more appreciated and respected. She also felt empowered to have some control over how she was treated by her husband in her own home.

This is just another example. Being straightforward, many couples use consequences and rewards in their relationships. Many use them spitefully and selfishly with no structure or sense of fairness. Should you wish to use consequences and rewards consciously, they should be constructed to the particular situation and partner. Make sure the consequences are not cruel or abusive – just uncomfortable.

It is common among dedicated L/S partners for the L-type to be obligated to provide "correction" to the S-type if they fail to uphold agreements they make with their L-type. (And perhaps you thought the most scandalous part of this book was going to be about sex!) There are structured consequences in respected and successful organizations such as the military branches, business and even social organizations. Rewards and consequences help keep the integrity of the operations successful and moving ahead.

In fact, here are just a few responses from S-types when asked a question about how they would feel if their actions/mistakes/neglect/lack of follow through were ignored and they weren't provided correction/consequences by their L-type partner: "I would feel lost and unloved;" ... "like I

didn't exist;" "...that she didn't value our relationship;" "...unwanted and insecure."

Rewards: praise, validation, and appreciation are just as important! Remember to praise and reward healthy and loving behavior just as much or more than any other habits you have in the relationship. Some L-type partners aren't as freely giving of positive reinforcement. They can get stuck in "business mode," overseeing and deciding family responsibilities and obligations when their partner is patiently waiting for positive reinforcement.

Know that positive reinforcement can be learned. L-types can start by acknowledging or validating their partner before they begin constructive criticism or being firm. They can also provide much appreciation and praise randomly and unprompted. L-types, it becomes a habit and gets easier the more you instantly see and hear the appreciation from your partner.

This is strong and healthy medicine for your L/S bond. If both partners are close, the "shared purpose" between them is stronger. They can receive and give more love with each other and the quality and chances that their relationship will last are better.

## **Other Aspects to L/S**

L/S platonic friend or L/S business partner relationships can thrive with similar dynamics. Some L-types and S-types are drawn to be friends or partners in business with their complementary type; and that can provide for some very loyal, productive, and successful alliances. This doesn't mean that every friendship or business colleague is a counterpart to L/S people.

There are many ways that this relationship model is used and enjoyed by committed couples. Can there be a sexual side to it that can be explored? Absolutely, this can be explored endlessly. There are some excellent books that can provide guidance and information on that subject.

Can it have a spiritual component to it? Of course; that could be in the form of sharing a higher purpose together. Some L/S partners have said they find enlightenment through their partner, through their own service to and sacrifice for them, and/or through united purpose. As many families have found a spiritual leader in the head of the family, some of those in L/S relationships feel the same way.

Again, L/S does not require a specific focus in the areas of sex or spirituality. Since this is a general introduction and guide to this relationship model, these areas are purposely not explored in this book. However, be encouraged to explore them on your own as you are inspired.

## **More Research Insights and Survey Results**

Even though the partners are opposite types (Leading and Supportive.), there is no distinction whether either partner is primarily introverted or extroverted. Of course, there are many S-type extroverts who are attracted to or are with L-types who are introverts and vice-versa. Both L/S partners could have the same personality aspect.

The two biggest issues that S-types have had in past relationships have been indecisiveness and indirection on their partner's part. This often happens when S-types are in relationships with non-L/S partners.

The two biggest issues that L-types have had in past relationships have been passivity and lack of follow through on their partner's part. As well, this is common when L-types are in relationships with non-L/S partners.

Survey respondents were asked what they can improve on individually in an L/S relationship. The top three answers from L-types were: - Be more aware of what my partner offers me - Be more consistent

- Be more patient

The top three answers from S-types were: - Be of better service to my partner - Honor what my partner needs from me - Have better communication

L/S partners are very happy and comfortable being the kind of partner they are despite sometimes being judged or misunderstood by others. The overwhelming majority was extremely grateful for and appreciative of their partner and valued them greatly. The love and devotion that was expressed was consistent throughout responses.

Many of them seem to think highly of their partner. They speak of them in very proud or admiring ways, no matter how long they have been together. Those outside the

relationship may even see this as having "rose-colored glasses."



## **Final Thoughts for S-types**

Even people who know you well may not fully realize your strength, patience, and resilience. Most likely, your L-type partner, the one person who needs you the most, knows this. After all, your beloved L-type wouldn't be living as who they truly are without a partner, and they chose you!

I encourage you to get in touch with your personal value and strength and own them. Your service is greatly appreciated, and it's important that your partner reflects this to you. It's imperative that you check in with your L-type partner with your needs for acknowledgement, praise, and reassurance.

In fact, you are obligated to do that. I can't stress this enough: Tell your partner what you need! Avoiding this is unfair to your L-type, and it puts your relationship at a disadvantage. Don't let the strength and integrity of the relationship be compromised. Your partner needs your input. In healthy relationships, an L-type doesn't mind and is glad to give copious amounts of positive reinforcement and affection.

Consistency is a key to stability for your relationship. If it's either an off day, your birthday, things are stressful, you are still the S-type and you are still in service to your L-type. That being said, some partners negotiate a few hours or a day off so the S-type can take time just for themselves. Make sure you arrange and take downtime when you need it; even plan for it when necessary - consistently. Regularly-scheduled personal breaks help you recharge and maintain balance in your life.

Service comes in so many ways. Of course you don't want your service to be ignored or rejected - you want it to be appreciated. So remember that your partner feels the same. Your L-type partner serves you with guidance, decision-

making, encouragement, motivation, and puts plenty of effort and energy into it.

When it seems like they are taking credit for your improved life, they are usually just trying to get some recognition of the positive influence they have been to you. Make it clear that you did the work. Acknowledge that their encouragement, help, support, and urging made such a difference for you.

Please remember that it's possible your friends and family may think that your partner is a/an (insert not so nice description here.), and it's important to let them know that *you* chose your partner specifically. You are happy; you have your eyes open. Share with your other loved ones that what you want and need matters to your partner and gets addressed fully. Assure them that if you become unhappy with the relationship at some point, you will take full responsibility for your happiness. If any of your friends and/or family can't agree with your choice of partner or type of relationship, then ask them to at least respect that it's your choice. Then you can move on and enjoy your life without having to prove anything to anyone.

Be preventative of power struggles and live in appreciation and joy of your L/S relationship: quite often, your L-type will mess up. Yes of course they will make the wrong call, not be attentive enough during a crucial moment or just make mistakes. If they truly took on the part of head of household or the leader in the relationship, I recommend two things that can help you maintain your part in this:

- 1) Don't take back the power that you freely gave;
- 2) If they are doing their best, even when they are wrong, in a way they are right.

Finally, as your L-type partner is supposed to be in service to you as well, if your needs, wants, potential, and dreams are not being treated as high priority on a consistent basis

be clear about this to your partner. If this doesn't change, you may consider transitioning out of your relationship into a more supportive environment and situation so you can take care of yourself better with the support of those who genuinely want you to have a life that you desire.

## **Final Thoughts for L-types**

At times, you question yourself and hold yourself to some standards that are all too often elusive. Give yourself credit! You are strong – even when you don't feel strong. When you are ill or injured or in self-doubt, just remember in your relationship, you are loved and admired for who you are and for the way you know and love your partner. They see you differently than anyone else. As your fellow team player, your partner depends on and awaits your service and direction.

Be preventative. Use lessons learned to set up structure and systems that work best for you, your partner, and your household.

Both of you can put a plan in place to keep things going when you need to rest, recover, heal, recharge. Remember to make sure they maintain the supportive position while you recover and heal. This keeps things from shutting down, prevents more problems and facilitates your healing/recovery.

Have your partner serve you in ways that help you be more of who you are meant to be. What nurtures you and feeds you the most will help you be your best for both of you.

You may hold yourself to high standards. That's fine, but be realistic. Keep in mind that you are human and your humanness must be honored. Don't let your ego get in the way. This relationship is about unity, not all about you. You may be at risk of projecting your self-critical feelings onto your partner. This hurts your partner to the core and erodes the relationship.

As well, your partner may transfer feelings about their past towards you as the family authority, so help them with this awareness instead of taking it personally.

Hopefully you are honored to be served by and be in service to someone with whom you share such mutual love and appreciation with. They easily offer what you may not be able to do. You are the leader, you may be their advisor and guide, but neither of you is better or more perfect than the other.

Being open to sharing your feelings and needs with your partner is an understatement, because you should be an example to them in this way and supporting them to do the same. This should be a non-negotiable element central to your household. You need to create a safe space for both to come forward and share!

No, it doesn't feel good to have them unhappy, especially with you. Yet it will get much worse if you don't talk about it, see each other's sides, and follow through on compromise.

In fact, as you probably read in the above section; dear L-types, avoid any temptation to take credit for all of your partner's achievements and improvements! Avoid the temptation to try to talk them out of their feelings or opinions. Eventually *it doesn't work and just causes more damage*. Making excuses, debating or arguing about their beliefs and experiences doesn't make them go away. I encourage you to address those head-on, and even take responsibility for your part in some of the issues.

Do you really mean it when you say you will do anything to keep your relationship health and happy? Then when *either* of you feel that it's time, find an L/S-friendly relationship professional and give them a chance. If it's not the right fit, find another.

Give your partner a break regularly; they are pretty amazing but need to recharge and take time for themselves.

They need to receive loving praise, actions, and attention from you. Find out all you can about them and help them be who they are really meant to be. You believe in them, and

they've always needed that. A little bit of love and appreciation goes a long way. You should find ways to feed your partner with these things on a frequent and consistent basis. If that doesn't come natural, then get someone to help you learn. If it comes natural, consider doing more of same.

As your S-type may tell you: it's important to them that the "little" things they do are appreciated by you. Finally, you are trusted and loved as a Leading partner if you are with your counterpart. Use your powers for good.

## **For L/S People Who Are "Sensitives"**

L/S partners who consider themselves "sensitives" - "HSP"s (Highly Sensitive People), empaths - can be either S-types or L-types. They have genetic differences so they process things differently.

Here are a few brief words for some of my favorite people: have structure in place to prevent over-stimulation and becoming overwhelmed; manage the balance of rest and alone time with the daily obligations and pressures. Play hard and physically vent any stress or tension.

Take the re-charge time you need; it helps to maintain that balance that keeps you on your game. Accept yourself for the unique person you are; don't compare yourself to anyone. Adjust yourself to the life you want, not to what may work for someone else.

Remember two resources we have been given that can get you through just about anything: humor and gratitude. Be amused and be grateful for the little things throughout your day.

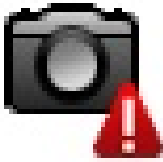
## **Appreciation**

To Terry, Erica, Donna, Baby Liz for all of your help and support. To my little brother Jim (for help with the title), Kerry the sailor, my fantastic L/S clients, and Dad and Mom (for help with the author). To my editor Sandra Childress at [campbellsbooksoup.com](http://campbellsbooksoup.com) and the mental health professionals who contributed. To the survey respondents, those in the lifestyles and communities who live this relationship dynamic because you are being who you are, the Dominant and Submissive, Leading and Supportive partners around the world – big cheer for you! I have learned so much from you.

I continue to applaud, respect, and admire your love, service and commitment to your partners and families. I hope this material helps you with more understanding of yourself and provides more understanding from those you are close to. I support you and wish great love for you.



# About the Author



Chris M. Lyon is a Personal Coach, Relationship Expert and a Board Certified Consulting Hypnotist. She is a columnist and contributor to numerous publications. Her work is intuitive and varied; specialties are in the broad ranges of relationships, sensitives, and confidence. She is a successful relationship facilitator and teaches "Managed Care for Relationships."

Chris enjoys being a paradox, originating from the combination of her liberal yoga instructor mother and conservative CFO father, and is easily amused and never bored. She is a happy long-term L/S partner and lives in the foothills of the mountains outside of Phoenix, Arizona with her family.

For more information, including products and services offered, please visit the homepage at [www.ChrisMLyon.com](http://www.ChrisMLyon.com) or Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/CoachLyon](http://www.facebook.com/CoachLyon)

For a brief informative and entertaining video on Dominant and Submissive (Leading and Supportive) relationships: <http://youtu.be/naE9nMKLJ0M>

## **L/S RESOURCE LIST**

Professionals for counseling, facilitation and/or coaching for L/S partners and L/S relationships:

Mike Giordano, LICSW Psychotherapist Website:  
[www.whatihearyousaying.com](http://www.whatihearyousaying.com) Email:  
[mike.giordano.msw@gmail.com](mailto:mike.giordano.msw@gmail.com) Phone: 202-460-6384  
Address: 1633 Q Street NW, Suite 210, Washington, District  
of Columbia 20009

Sharon Golden, MS., N.C.C., L.M.H.C Counselor Email:  
[shagolden3@aol.com](mailto:shagolden3@aol.com)  
Phone: 516-791-9373  
Address: 1335 Paine Rd, Hewlett NY 11557

Richard Levine, M.A., M.F.T. Psychotherapist Website:  
[www.RichardLevineMFT.com](http://www.RichardLevineMFT.com) Email: [RLevineMFT@aol.com](mailto:RLevineMFT@aol.com)  
Phone: 323-344-0440  
Offices in Hollywood and Eagle Rock, CA  
Kate Loree, LMFT, ATR, MBA Marriage and Family Therapist  
Website: [www.kateloree.com](http://www.kateloree.com)  
Email: [klореelmft@gmail.com](mailto:klореelmft@gmail.com)  
Phone: 310-422-7269  
Address: 15720 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 416, Encino,  
California 91436

Chris M. Lyon, CC, BCH, Personal Coach, Relationship Expert  
Website: [www.ChrisMLyon.com](http://www.ChrisMLyon.com)  
Email: [LS@chrismlyon.com](mailto:LS@chrismlyon.com)  
Phone: 480-288-2723  
Phoenix-East Valley, Arizona

Stephen M. Mathis, Psy.D, A.A.P.T.A., M.A.C., I.C.A.D.C.,  
C.C.A.D.C., C.C.D.P.-D., C.R.A.T

Licensed Psychologist and Certified Addictions Counselor  
Website: [www.Psychdoc.wordpress.com](http://www.Psychdoc.wordpress.com) Email:  
[stephenmathis313@comcast.net](mailto:stephenmathis313@comcast.net) Phone: 770-645-1800,  
Extension 3  
Offices in the greater Atlanta area.

Tamara Pincus LICSW Psychotherapist Website:  
[www.tamarapincus.com](http://www.tamarapincus.com)  
Email: [tpincus76@gmail.com](mailto:tpincus76@gmail.com)  
Phone: 202-531-2780  
Office in Washington DC area

Katherine Rachlin, Ph.D. Clinical Psychologist Website:  
[www.KatherineRachlin.com](http://www.KatherineRachlin.com) Email: [KitRachlin@gmail.com](mailto:KitRachlin@gmail.com)  
Phone: 212-206-3636  
Address: 49 West 24 Street, Suite 901, New York, NY 10010

Brad Sagarin, Ph.D. Professor of Psychology Website:  
[www.niu.edu/user/tj0bjs1](http://www.niu.edu/user/tj0bjs1)  
Email: [bsagarin@niu.edu](mailto:bsagarin@niu.edu)  
Phone: 815-753-7067  
Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, IL

*The above data was current at the time of publishing. The inclusion of a resource and/or listing of an individual, publication or business in this book does not constitute any recommendation, referral or suggestion of competency or specific approval by the Author. The Author has no control over the nature, content and availability of those resources.*

*This book details the Author's personal experiences with and opinions about relationships. Although the Author has made every effort to ensure that the information in this book was correct at the time of publication, the Author does not assume and hereby disclaims any liability to any party for any physical, psychological, emotional, financial, or commercial damages. Our views and rights are the same: You are responsible for your own choices, actions, and results.*

# Notes

Books referred to:

*Chapman, Gary. The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate (new edition). Northfield Press, 2004.*

Levy, Marion J., Jr. Our Mother-Tempers. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.

Recommended movie:

Secretary. Dir. Steven Shainberg. Lions Gate, 2002. Starring James Spader, Maggie Gyllenhaal.

This movie shows an L/S (or Dominant and Submissive) dynamic that many L/S people resonate with, whether taken seriously or more lighthearted. There are SM elements to it as well but the author's recommendation is due to the bigger L/S factor.